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PETER OF THE CASTLE.

PETER OF THE CASTLE;

AND

THE FETCHES.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

A New Edition,

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY MICHAEL BANIM, ESQ.,

THE SURVIVOR OF THE "O'HARA FAMILY."

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INTRODUCTION

TO

THE FETCHES.

I HAVE had occasion, in a previous introduction of mine to this edition of our Tales, to allude to Barnes O'Hara's first resolute plunge into the literary current of the great metropolis, wherein so few find a footing, and beneath the waters of which so many are submerged; their buffetings against the stream unknown, or may-hap their fate regarded as retributive for presumption, by those who float buoyantly on.

I have before stated that on the evening when my brother and his young wife reached London, their purse was very lank indeed. Although the wife's father ranked as a country gentleman, he, like many of his class in Ireland, lived fully up to his income if not beyond it, and my brother received no dowry. Taking a wife, however, without a fortune, only proved his disinterestedness. A late literary success had put him in funds: this appeared to his sanguine eye as nothing more than the first fruits, raised from a mine of precious ore, more and more and more to be brought to the surface, whenever sought for. There was no need of looking after shillings, when sovereigns were to be had for the seeking; and so, when the provident pair took up

their quarters at Brompton Grove, in London, their honeymoon not yet on the wane, the contents of their purse would not take long to reckon.

We knew nothing here at home about the escape of the gas from my brother's balloon—he did not inform us of his descent until he had remounted. He had for some time declared his resolve to win his way to fame and wealth without aid from any one. He had floated beyond our contracted vision, and we supposed him to be sailing loftily. We could and we would have given him good aid in his need, but he was too proud and too self-reliant to ask it even of us, and we learned of his difficulties only when he had surmounted them.

My brother was scarcely twenty-four, and his wife four years his junior when they reached London. Notwithstanding the modest jingle of the purse, the husband held up his head, and assured the wife it should soon be replenished; and she did not doubt him for one instant. Independence, nay, more than independence was within his reach;—she saw him so true a believer himself that she adopted his creed implicitly.

A little while, however, and the prophet had reason to doubt his gift of prescience. Holding his head high as the writer of the very successful drama of Damon and Pythias, he sought a literary engagement. Day after day he sought opportunity to exercise the literary talent his self-measurement led him to conclude that he possessed;—day after day he returned to Brompton Grove, weary and crest-fallen—day by day becoming less confident of himself, and more doubtful of his ability to redeem the pledge he had made to his believing wife.

He told me afterwards that, had he been alone, he must have faltered and failed; that he must inevitably have

become hopeless and paralyzed; that, in fact, apprehension on his wife's account imparted unflagging perseverance. We knew nothing of his dangerous position at home, as I have before said, or aid would have been rendered.

At length, when the purse yielded no jingle at all, shake it ever so briskly, he obtained an engagement on a weekly periodical, "The Literary Register," the salary £102 per annum, paid weekly. For this, to him at the time, large income, he turned his hand to many things. He was the art critic to the "Register," for which he was fairly qualified, having studied the theory of painting closely, with the intention of being an artist. He criticised books on all subjects, knowing very little about some of them, as he subsequently acknowledged to me: he even taught his wife the craft of criticising, as he also jocularly revealed to me. He attended the theatre, as theatrical critic, on special occasions: and he contributed light papers, now and again. Writing to me, at this time, he thus expresses himself: "The obligation to write, whether 'i' the vein' or not, I have to meet. The insatiable maw of the printer's devil must be crammed, whether the food be nutricious, or barely filling, or even hurtful."

After a while, Ellen, his wife, helping to satisfy the appetite of the special printer's devil he was bound to gratify, he occasionally contributed to other periodicals besides "The Literary Register." The very first tale in which he and I were jointly concerned was published in the "European Magazine," under the title of "Molcth na Vaugha, or, the Mother's Curse." My brother's connexion with the "Literary Register" was in the year 1822. Amongst his light papers contributed thereto, the superstition of "The Fetch" was introduced; and

on these papers the matured tale, published first in 1825, and now reproduced, was founded.

I trust I may be excused for giving this scrap of biography in connexion with "The Fetches."

I should mention that, with the exception of having the tale sent to me for judgment and paring, previous to publication, "The Fetches" was written by Barnes O'Hara.

MICHAEL BANIM.

Kilkenny, 11*th August*, 1866.

INTRODUCTION

TO

PETER OF THE CASTLE.

"PETER OF THE CASTLE" was originally published in 1826. It was begun and ended in a month, and appeared as the Third Volume of the Second Series of the Tales. Two portions only of "Peter of the Castle" were contributed by me; the introductory chapter, descriptive of our Hibernian mode of celebrating the Continental Carnival, and a sketch of the proceedings at a country wedding, made use of in the fifth chapter, these were furnished at my brother's request, and dovetailed into his story.

Barnes O'Hara had never been at an Irish country wedding, but Abel O'Hara had been a guest at many. I have before stated that I made it my business at the time to avail myself of every possible opportunity to mix with the people I wished to describe. And let it not be thought that I venture on an untenable assertion when I state, that at the wedding feasts attended by me, professionally I may say, where the Irish rustics were seen to the best advantage, I encountered little other than genuine politeness, as I understand the term. "To do or say nothing that can injure, or even give pain," is a pithy definition of politeness, given in my hearing by a very

amiable, and a very polite man too. For this definition few, I think, will find a more expressive substitute. The rules and formulæ of society are nothing more than a code, compelling the ill-natured, the careless, and the depraved, to seem, outwardly at least, "to do unto others as they would wish to be done by."

Adopting this short and definite elucidation of what the word politeness means, and making due allowance for those who had not had the advantage of studying Chesterfield's letters to his son, so little esteemed by the impolite Doctor Johnson, I am bold enough to assert that I have met at our Irish marriage feasts, never otherwise that I can remember, true and genuine politeness. As for myself personally, I found a consideration and attention, impulsive, I admit, but not rude or embarrassing—all round me there were merry but not licentious faces—frequently awkward, but always hearty greetings, good-fellowship, and good humour.

And why should not these be the characteristics of an Irish "country wedding," as witnessed by me. The young of both sexes came there dressed in their choicest holiday attire; the old came there in their Sunday clothes also;—the boys and girls came to be sweet with each other, impelled by the same universal law of attraction that influences the high and the low; and the old came there to forget crops and weather, tithes, taxes, and rents, and be careless and jovial to their hearts' content; and the consequence was that all crudities were softened, and the amenities sprouted out luxuriantly.

The presence of as many above their own rank in life as the two families about to be united could enlist, or seduce to attend, was a desideratum at the nuptial banquet; and for good reasons, too, was the lure set forth and the pressure brought to bear.

It was not lost sight of, that distinction and *eclat* were obtained by the attendance at the wedding feast of persons holding rank above the inviters; as stars of superior magnitude, all such shed a temporary brilliancy, illuminating the system. But there was a more mundane and a more vital reason, for canvassing the landlord, the agent, the interested shopkeeper who had supplied the groceries and the drinkables, and the others who had furnished the fabrics for the wedding attire, and, beyond such as these, any of a like grade who had been on some occasion or other even distantly civil.

Not only the immediate connexions of the young couple to be married, but indeed the entire neighbourhood where the wedding was to take place, felt it imperative that the festivity should bear high repute and reflect honour on all concerned: the family pride, and the general local pride were at stake; and no pains were spared, or precautions neglected, to have the wedding lauded as "a grand wedding entirely."

The fame of the wedding was to be established by the amount of the offering made in exchange for the tendered bride-cake; it was either "a grand wedding," or it was not, in proportion to the sum so contributed; and heads were carried loftily or depressed, according to the magnitude or mediocrity of the gathering. The poorest neighbour was not excluded from the almost general invitation; but it behoved those concerned for the reputation of the two families immediately interested, and truly for the reputation of the length and breadth of the parish, to make provision that the meagre offering of the lowly visitor should be counterbalanced by the liberality of other guests, willing and able to lay down stoutly. It will be understood, therefore, that a good sprinkling of superior folk was to be provided, if

the wedding was to be spoken of as "a grand wedding entirely."

I was a guest at a country wedding in the first instance by solicitation on my part to the priest. I went, of course, to study my subject, as a painter would say. Subsequently, my fame was bruited about: I was understood to be a generous donator, and I got credit too for the aptitude with which I entered into the hilarious proceedings of those with whom I mingled: subsequent invitations were frequent in consequence. I am able to say, therefore, that the description of the wedding in the story of "Peter of the Castle" is faithful.

Were I still young, and a "bachelor boy," I would regret the change that has taken place since "Peter of the Castle" was written. The marriage vow is now, in all cases, pledged before the altar in the Catholic church of the parish; and the out-and-out hilarity of my young days does not now accompany the marriage ceremony.

MICHAEL BANIM.

Kilkenny, 14*th May*, 1866.

PETER OF THE CASTLE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"THERE is a time for all things," saith the proverb; and while this is taken to mean that there are distinct times proper to all the various acts we have to perform, we presume it further permits the same thing to be done at different times and in different places. For instance :—

The month of May, with its flowers, and its soft breezes, and its mild sun, is generally allowed to be the best season for young, ardent love to blossom, and, from its novelty and freshness, to yield the purest delight. And yet we are aware of another season, in our own marrying country, when, tired of their gambols round the winter fire-side, weary even of their mutual devotions, and, as it were, miserable at their happiness, love leads his votaries, manacled, two by two, before the throne of Hymen, in processions so long and crowded as to create much squeezing and elbowing on the road;—alas! that the despotic divinity, sober-sided Hymen, should so often prove ungrateful for the services of his laughing purveyor!—that he should so often bang his door against the terrified little god of love, leaving him to fly away self-convicted of the folly of providing subjects for one so thankless!—But that is not our present business.

Lent, the chief time of fast and abstinence among Roman Catholic people, sets in, upon an average, (for it is a "moveable" period,) towards the end of February. During its continuance, marriage, along with many other savoury indulgences, cannot lawfully be attained; and, as an enforced

forbearance of six or seven weeks seems too hard a trial, merely, perhaps, because it is a compulsory probation, a great movement of the middle and lower orders, male and female, takes place some time before; that is, during the season termed "Shrovetide," or, as our countrymen and countrywomen call it, "Shroft," so that the Irish Hymen is, conjointly with his more serious divinityship, the god of pancakes also.

As this great time approaches, the influx into country towns of rural belles, and, as a matter of course, of rural beaux, is very remarkable; the former, with their best beaver-hats (articles of superior fashion), cocked after the smartest taste, or their caps set on with a peculiar air; their best smiles on their rosy lips; and their witching glances, plainly understood by the opposite files to mean—"who wants a wife?" Nor do "the boys" repair to this passage of arms unconscious of a motive, or negligent of the proofs of one. The most flaming waistcoats are provided; new corduroy small-clothes, with gilt buttons at the knees (not always used for the purpose they have been put in, for they are left to swing open, when button and button-hole should mutually embrace, agitating their long silk strings); well-fitting stockings; and—the brogues kicked off on the occasion—small-pointed shoes, all showing, to the greatest advantage, the excellent leg and instep: while the hat set at one side, a roguish leer, an ostentatious display of person, whether "rollicking," or snug, or well-rigged to suit all tastes, are distinguishing signs to the fair critics, that "such, or such, have a notion of taking on" at the coming Shroft. Former courtships are renewed; new ones are entered upon; and the opponents in this pleasant encounter may be seen dividing in pairs, with their respective adherents, towards the public-house; the girls at first demurring, through well-acted timidity; yet, after much coaxing and pressing, kindly yielding to "take the treat;" alive as any of their betters to the great axiom of women's nature, that a conquest at a first attack is but indifferently valued.

If the old folk happen to be stingy, the girls who can do it, now embezzle "mescauns o' butther," "mauleens o' corn," "hanfuls o' praties," or "glaums o' wool," to be disposed of, under the rose, at the market; and with the proceeds of this contraband trade, throng to the ribbon shops, where, if two

or three from the same neighbourhood, and upon the same all-important errand, happen to meet, they may be observed, to the seller's cost, pondering, and consulting, and hesitating, and whispering, before a choice of the most destructive colour can possibly be made out of the variety before them; or, when things have come to a serious pass, the mother, with two or three old cronies, will accompany them, with an ample purse, to conduct more important bargains; and then money flies liberally, while many little stratagems are used that the sagacious shopman or shopwoman may not guess (what is easily conjectured) the exact purpose for which such unusual finery is procured: a secret the old dame tries to keep to herself, lest advantage should be taken of the admission in the price of the article, and which "the young thing" hides "because it is mannerly to do so."

Now is the time when the fair ones, who have previously been courted and flattered to little purpose, are expected to "lave off their thricks an' their quare ways," and give the long-expected, and, indeed, long-intended, yes, or *sha asthore*, as the case may be;—mentally adding after all their little coquetry (as one among them acknowledged to us, on a recent occasion), "thankee for axin'." Now is the time when fathers, who have sons or daughters to settle in the world, meet in the little village public-house, and. "Darby, that's a clane, comely colleen belongin' to you," commences many a treaty which is discussed over a pot of ale. And then comes the assembling of all parties the next market-day, when the money matters are talked over "to the very farthen, an' to the farthen itself," betwixt the old men, with as much cool calculation as distinguishes the diplomacy of their superiors on similar occasions; while the mothers, taking in hand another branch of the subject, discourse of the natural or acquired, the mental or personal perfections of the young couple. By one, the expert housewifery of the girl is set forth; "her nate, cool hands for makin' the butther;" the pieces of linen (to go in as part of her "portion") brought by her to "the blache" last season, and wrought with a thrifty foresight to the wants of a future establishment, whether we consider sheeting, or articles of male and female wear; in fact, all the young woman's useful accomplishments and habits are stated, and, as the tale comes from a mother's tongue, it cannot much be wondered at if, now and then, there occur a little exag-

geration. And the other old dame displays, perhaps, with some slight decorations also, her son's excellences; his industry, late and early; his knowledge of his business, in all its branches of ploughing, sowing, reaping, mowing, stacking, threshing; his good nature and good humour; his spirit; his manly feats at running, or leaping, or hurling, or wrestling; nay, the eulogist may, with sparkling eyes, even hint his skill at cudgel or alpeen; and, in what they call "a pig's whisper" —(that is, a confidential tone, meant, as it were, for one particular ear, while all around can hear it, if they will)—a few anecdotes of his prowess and conquests in this way may be thrown into the scale, as a make-weight.

All this while, placed in the back-ground, in a shady corner, where distance and twilight hide the blushes of the one, and give secrecy to the speech or acts of the other, the young couple, the conscious subjects of this pro and con, sit—if they like each other—"coortin' away, for the bare life;" or if on the contrary, the match happen to be one of mere speculation and convenience, got up by the old people, and indifferent to them, they sit, at a shy distance, on the same form, staring at each other, and half resolving to upset every arrangement, and in recollection of a "boy or a girl of their own," have everything their own way.

Many there are –("alas poor country!")—and those even the greater number, whose matrimonial treaties are arranged without any such debating; whose pecuniary resources are almost confined to the *soggarth's* fee; who will be necessitated to move, by many pitiful stories, his Christian compassion, or will even invent some melancholy untruth, that he may be induced to perform the ceremony at an under price, and leave them a shilling towards the stock for the scanty wedding-feast. The rest they trust to Providence; and, sooner than permit the long Lent to pass over their heads in celibacy, offer their hands for the manacle with as jovial a grace, as much precipitancy, and as good a hope of passing a pleasant honeymoon, as if they were certain of two days' victuals after the bridal night, or as if their progeny were to be the heritors of abundance, kindliness, and comfort, not of poverty, neglect, and wretchedness.

Nor is it the rural atmosphere alone that propels to matrimonial movements, as the Shrovetide comes on. The selfsame inspiration pervades the town air. In our considerable

town, at least, Shrovetide is generally understood to mean the season for maids to become wives, and bachelors to change their condition.

There are, we believe, in all such communities as we speak of, regular visiting folks, of both sexes, necessary to the comforts of the stay-at-home part of the population, as carriers of news, true or false, and circulators of the petty tattle so acceptable to the ever-craving appetite of curiosity, and who are, therefore, welcome visitors almost wherever they go. Among this class of persons, elderly maids and bacherlors, possessing small annuities, just sufficient to keep up a decent appearance out of doors, yet too scanty for their comfort at home, form a considerable portion. To them, a cup of tea in the evening, with, if they be of the male sex, the addition of a glass of the good beverage, whiskey punch, is very acceptable; hence, finding it their interests to render themselves agreeable, they take good care to come furnished to the fire-sides of their friends with ready answers to the questions most suitable to every season; and none of them will deny that as pancake-day or Shrove Tuesday draws near, they find it peculiarly necessary to keep an eye on the motions, and to dive into the resolves of the marriageable persons around them, in order to appear fully prepared for the universal query—"what weddings are going on?" Indeed, and by-the-way, the very kind of individuals we mean sometimes supply, in their own persons, and apart from their information about others, more direct evidence of the benign influence of this period. From among their throng, even maids of long standing and bachelors of ancient growth, step out with a livelier grace; wax unusually brisk and mettlesome; sport new "fronts," selected for the occassion, or new wigs, of the recollected colour of their locks, what time the mother's care had smoothed and polished the boy's ringlets; and look about them, and trot in the direction where fellow-feelings prevail, full of pleasing ideas, and the half-forgotten music of early life again tingling in their ears;—and we are happy to add that, even in their regard, and always considering them bound to choose among themselves, the season does not invariably prove inauspicious.

Staid citizens, fathers, and uncles, who have previously taken an account of stock, ascertained the tot of the ledger balance-sheet, and withdrawn their daughter's or their niece's

portion from the perils of business, begin to cast a cautious eye around ; make underhand inquiries as to how their young male neighbours stand in the world, and become close spies on their actions ; and when a youth of substance and character is at last selected, their cordial recognition of him as he passes their door, or meets them in the street, or in a friend's house, is easily interpreted into, "Son-in-law how do you do?"

Youngish men, who have made improvable establishments, and to whom the entry, "Stock, Dr. Cash," would be a pleasing item, divest their features of their very sober cast, brighten them up with a holiday air, employ the most esteemed fashioners, assume the cavalier, seat themselves on horseback with as much grace as is possible, or, if not with grace, at least with an affected recklessness of the dreaded results of their new situation ; put "money in both pockets," and set off to scour the adjacent country in search of wives—at a gallop, if they can attempt it with safety, or even a little daring; velocity of movement being esteemed as most in character with the gaiety of wooers. But these doughty knights-errant will scarce ever be seen entering with their "God save all here," where the old chest or the old cow's horn is known to be empty. With them, love is "no welcome customer," unless he come into the shop with a money bag on his back, prepared to fling it on the counter, or pour it into "the till;" so laden, that they are happy to see him ; empty-handed he may stay outside ; and then any young woman, no great matter whom, burthened in a similar way, will be as well received without him as with him.

Novelty is a prevailing charm for human eyes ; and young maidens who have stepped into a town on market-days, to delight themselves with the brilliancy of its shops and its streets, sometimes prefer, from the novelty of the change, a townsman to a mere rustic sweetheart ; and when such a one, as has last been described, comes, careering at a gallant pace towards the farm-house, in the proper season for such a visit, they seldom fail to guess the motive of his journey. The fair and conscious object of attraction will, on this occasion, be posted, covertly, at a casement ; behind her the vanithee ; still more behind, the nurse ; and, over the shoulders of all, elevated on a three legged stool, perhaps the serving wench : each eager to witness the dashing advance

of the candidate for favour, and to applaud or criticise, as the case may be.

If fair young city virgins now observe significant movements in the visits of father and mother out of doors, or become aware, without seeming to be at all aware, that unusual consultations are going forward, they hope and trust, and pray, morning and evening, that from somebody of whom they dreamt the last All-hallow-Eve, overtures have been received. Now serving-maids quit one state of servitude, only to enter suddenly upon another, not so easily to be got rid of at a "warning;" now apprentices, committing a breach of that part of their indentures which binds them not to enter the matrimonial state till the expiration of their long seven years, steal out of an evening, get married, steal back behind the counter next morning, and out again at a window when "the shop is shut." Desperate run-away matches are daily heard of, precipitated by the not-always-successful endeavours to marry young people against their inclinations, or else by the impatient love that despairs of parental forbearance, and shrinks at the long period of privation between "Ash Wednesday" and Easter Sunday.

As story-tellers, we must be supposed rather closely to regard human nature, and motives to action, in order to understand the value of occurrences around us; certainly we have learned to divine, almost to a nicety, the state of thought indulged, as Shrovetide comes on, by all our acquaintance, and even by those with whom we are only casually civil or conversant. The never-failing, though, perhaps, newly assumed smile, so soft, so constant, so bewitching, of a fair friend; the manner so determinedly obliging; these symptoms—particularly if an emendation upon usual habits—we take as proof that first preliminaries are arranged for the grand step; that she has learned as much from her parents, and that she is content to venture upon a new character, before Shrove-Tuesday, if she can be pleased with an offer.

When, with a short hurried step, indicating a desire to reach a given point as soon as possible; with downcast eyelids, sometimes allowing to escape around, an unquiet, timid glance, expressive of a certain sensitive fearfulness that people are looking at her, and speaking of her, as she goes along; when, showing these symptoms, a pretty, modest, flurried little creature crosses our calm observant path, we at

once conclude, and half sigh with, we believe, a kind of reflected pleasure at the conclusion, that she has yielded, very lately, a blushing promise to make her chosen youth all the happier of this happy time.

If we see nothing singular, nothing unusual in a young woman; nothing but the decently-measured tread; nothing but the every-day port, or only the old smile, common to a handsome face; then we judge that matters are not in train that season.

We are quick to discern the sneer, which, more positively than ever, agitates the features of often-disappointed spinsters, as they descant on the prospects and pretensions of some who are about to attain the envied rank of matronly consideration: and just as quick to note the proud ostentatious bearing of others of the same standing, who have been successful in the grand object of the day, and are at length on the eve of being of consequence in the world, notwithstanding the long forebodings of their friends, and the terrible apprehensions of their own bosoms.

We have learned, on the other hand, to judge by the more than usual attention to personal appearance of an industrious youngster, by his studied suavity, and by his skilful disguise of whatever of the unamiable we have previously noted in his character, that he is "on the look-out," and therefore "putting his best leg foremost." From the junction of bustle and briskness, in another, of hurry and good-humour, of an important manner, and yet a growing disposition to say smart things, we set down that he is preparing his affairs for the spectacled criticism of some cool examiner who has a fair charge to dispose of: or, he is taking measures, perhaps, to leave things in such a train that, with propriety, he may be absent for a space, after the ceremony, supposing him of sufficient consequence to aim at throwing off the good old custom of wedding-cheer and bridal dance, and, conformably with the fashionable scale, take a scamper for the honey-moon to the metropolis, where he can link gentility and pleasure with business, and (his wife's portion in his pocket-book,) purchase a fresh stock of goods, to be home a day or two before he returns to the shop.

We know why the sleek new suit is shyly mounted by him who has worn the former one time out of mind. We know why the elderly person, who has waited till about his forty-

fifth year for a meet recurrence of the season, smooths down his hair with unwonted precision, and is seen every evening, after the hour of business, stepping out with—even should there be no cloud—an umbrella tucked under his arm, and cautiously entering one certain house.

If we see painters and carpenters, and upholsterers and paper-hangers, going into a bachelor's mansion, they give "notes of preparation."

If a young man of sober habits be detected with a song-book, or a jest-book laid on the leaf of his day-book, it is a sign of considerable restlessness at the approaching season. But if such a person be observed, at the age of thirty, skipping secretly into the private room of a dancing-master, there can no longer be a question but that he is about to caper out of the state of celibacy.

And should we meet, in one of our accustomed out-let walks, some fair young girl whom we once knew blooming and bounding in health, but now pale, drooping, and sad: her eye non-emittent of the laughing ray that often flung pleasure over our path; her native elastic step changed into a cheerless drooping gait; in fact her usual appearance and character lost in the dull langour that heart sickness throws over features and person; should such a being happen to pass us in our lonely promenade, we conclude that Shrovetide brings no joy to her; that either the youth she doats on is torn from her, or that before the season lapses, parental tyranny will force her into the arms of some wretch she loaths; that avarice has grasped the shrinking hand which would fain yield to the soft pressure of affection; and, instead of the silken bonds of true-love, that a chain, not the less ponderous because its links are of gold, is about to be fastened round the breaking heart;—from such a study, such are our conclusions; for, imitating the enterprise of the bland and delightful Master Crayon, we have the courage to proclaim that we, too, are believers in "broken hearts."

Shrovetide is the Soggarth's harvest; his season of pleasing because most profitable labour; his draught of fishes; his time of gathering in the vineyard. The antique grim-faced knocker of his door, painted, time out of mind, the colour of the door itself, sounds, from morning to evening, many a bold, many a timid, and many a thundering summons, as the case may be, from those who come to announce intended weddings, at

which he is, fortunately for him, so indispensable an agent. His housekeeper—generally some humble relation, or some "forbidding looking ould woman," of whom the very first view silences the tongue of scandal, and compels peeping suspicion to turn away his keen eye to some more plausible and inviting object—such a one, we say, the priest's housekeeper, must be constantly on the alert to answer the scarcely-heard knock of the poor couple who come to be married in the parlour, without even the full fee on such occasions, and who dream not of bride-cake or wedding-supper; or the rather bolder peal of those who call to invite the priest to celebrate the marriage at the house of the bride's father, damping however the good man's rising hopes, and the ardour of his assent, when they add, that "poor people must have poor weddings;"—and, again, and best of all, the long-resounding tantarrara which distinctly prefaces the summons of the wealthy farmer or citizen, who, with an air of self-importance, arrives to intimate the coming nuptials of his daughter, and at whose instance the priest readily promises a punctual attendance, anticipating rows behind rows of rich folk, each ready to lay down a pound note, at least, in exchange for a portion of the magical bride-cake.

If the priest be, to say nothing more, even a clever man, it will palpably be his business as well to prevent the possibility of a close acquaintance (unless by authority) between the sexes, as to promote, so far as in his power lies, every disposition to enter the holy marriage state. Accordingly, he must have his eye about him: watching the growth of his fair young parishioners into a marriageable maturity; glancing here and there, for proper husbands to match them; and, then, towards Shrovetide, he may hint his observations to all parties concerned, young and old, and conclude the business to the satisfaction of all, and to his own benefit.

Shrovetide brings grist to the mill of the followers of many other trades and occupations. The pastry-cook, or, to use a more local name, the confectioner, prepares the dainty bride-cake for the city wedding. The baker manufactures the more ponderous mass, "*baugheen brack*"—the loaf or cake with fruit in it—for the country feast, at which a crowd is to participate, who reckon on a good substantial slice for their money. Of the former, only small pieces are distributed, too delicate to be eaten, but sacredly treasured up to be

dreamt upon—(if passed through the bride's ring, all the better)—by the sighing maiden, who hopes, through its talismanic power, to conjure round her midnight couch of virgin innocence the adoring and adored shade of him, who, under Heaven, may, the very next Shrovetide, put it in her own power to endow a cake with the same effects, for the benefit of her former companions left behind her in the shadow of the valley of maidenhood.

As it must be pretty certain that a bridegroom who can get married in a new suit will not retain his old clothes, tailors' shears are, of course, kept clipping more constantly than at other seasons; and, for a like reason, dressmakers of all grades ply the subtle needle at Shrovetide more nimbly, and with lighter hearts than, in our town, they can be said to do at any other time the year round. Ribands, first, of all colours, then, as the season closes, white ribands in particular, flutter out at the vendors' doors in gay abundance; and white gloves, white silks and satins, white muslins, almost everything white, in fact, are necessarily in equal demand. Pipers, fiddlers, itinerant musicians of every kind, are on the alert, for it is the season of dancing. Beggars post, in tattered droves, from one nuptial bower to another, for it is the season of feasting bounty. Nay, and some individuals relinquish more reputable occupations, but such as, at this season, are less profitable, to join the armies, the hordes of mendicants, who, according to ancient custom, will have shared amongt them the profuse remnants of the wedding feast, and the largess of the wedding guests.

In a word, Shrovetide, in Ireland, is a time of unusual stir, bustle, and earnestness; a time of general consciousness and common sensations; a time when the thoughts and hearts, male and female, of a whole community labour and throb with but one notion, and, however it may be diversified, one feeling; a time of sighing and speech-making; of capering, of kissing, of piping, fiddling, and singing; of present happiness at least—(we have nothing to do with the future)—to almost every one; and big with interest and importance to the kingdom at large, although with philanthropic dismay and regret to Mr. Malthus, and his disciples and students in political economy.

CHAPTER II.

We regret that, for particular reasons, we cannot, as we are used to do, give the name of the district in Ireland in which the scene of the present tale is laid; but it was near to a village (that, as we go on, shall be distinguished by being called *the* village), through which, as well as through the whole adjacent country, the time of Shrovetide spread its influence, that about fifty years ago, standing at his spacious parlour windows, before dinner, the proprietor of an important mansion saw, lounging, as if bashfully, up the avenue, two rustic persons, one an old, the other a youngish man, whom, at a first view he did not know, and for whose uncalled appearance at such an hour, on a working day, he was puzzled to account. "Who can they be?" he half soliloquized, although another person sat in the room; "not Tady Corrigan, surely, with the half-year's rent; no, he's scarcely so punctual; nor his gossip, Mike Leary, with any part of the two half-years, so long promised; yet they walk straight towards the hall door; Redmond," turning to the individual mentioned, a youth of about twenty, who sat listlessly in a chair at the fire, and, it might be said, idly too, did not his bent brow, as he gazed at the embers, his folded arms, and, indeed, the general expression of his intelligent features, argue at once a mood of abstraction, merely, and a character of which idleness could have been no natural portion. "Redmond, who are those people?"

The young man slightly started, looked vacantly around, and in a cold tone, asked, "Where, sir?" His elderly companion as coldly directed his regards out at the window; the youth, scarcely rising or glancing down the avenue, said he did not know who they were.

"I think one of them is Patt Lynch, that bought the timber of Kilaldy wood last week. How much of that account has he left unpaid, sir?" again addressing the lad.

"Who, sir? what account?—"

With some cautious asperity, and a remark that his thoughts might, perhaps, be better engaged, and yet sufficiently alive to afford more attention, the senior renewed his

statement and his question, but still gained little information. The youth was sorry to say, he really knew nothing of the state of that particular account; indeed, to tell the truth, he believed he had quite lost all recollection of it.

The catechist frowned, askance and unseen, at him, bit his lip, and retorted in a measured tone,—"Nor of any other business, I fear, sir, which I have trusted into your hands; nor of any other matter, sir, fitted to your precarious situation in life, to your pretensions, or your prospects."

"What that situation, and those pretensions really are, sir, you know best," answered the person thus animadverted upon, coolly and gloomily, and laying an expressive emphasis on the word "really."

"I do, young gentleman," said the other, nodding slowly at him—"and, for the purpose of rousing you to a due sense of the efforts you are bound to make in the world, I have been compelled, much against my nature and my feelings for you, to explain, over and over, that delicate question."

"And I have been thinking, all this morning, of asking you to explain it once again, sir, when you may be at leisure to give me a little more information."

"Indeed, sir?" with another unseen sneer—"but, no matter; I am at your service at all times; and, perhaps, the sooner we conclude the subject, the better for both."

"Perhaps," said the lad:—"and now, sir," drawing to the window, "I can tell you who those poor men are; Darby Roach, and his eldest son, who rent the fifty hill-acres from you at Poulnamana."

"What, in Heaven's name, brings them here to-day?—no whining case of hardship, I hope: and now, what ails them?"—for, as he spoke, the old man, Darby Roach, having at last come near enough to recognize the amply-puffed and highly powdered head of "the masther," in the parlour window, strongly contrasted as it was to a complete suit of black, worn, with rather a professional air, over a middle-sized, substantial figure; Darby, we repeat, having distinctly caught this indication that the very eyes of the great person he wanted to see were fastened on him, first stopped to make a scrape and bow, to pull off his hat, and put it on again; then suddenly changed his hitherto lounging gait into a quick one, which, gradually increasing as he approached the house, at last ended in a run, as brisk as any man of sixty could

command upon occasion. His son, as he has been described, remained behind him, holding his hat in his hand, and looking on the ground with a bashful and conscious smile.

Sweeping by the steps of the hall-door, the father soon presented himself outside the window, and, stopping there, renewed his scrapes and bows, now addressed to both the gentlemen in the parlour, and accompanied by broad grins, of such a kind as bespoke earnestness in a very interesting, and withal, a very tickling subject.

"Well, honest Darby, and what's the matter with you to-day?" said "the masther," answering his looks and motions, rather than asking a question. The old man grew serious.

"Why, then, your honour, nothin' at all; only it's what sends us to you, to-day, is about a gorçoon of ours, an' somethin' that's goin' to happen to him, we b'lieve."

"Well?—I thought, just now, when you both looked so troubled, that something *had* happened to him; that, perhaps, Cushneiche* and the Yellow Sailor had paid you a visit, and borrowed all you had towards the next gale-day;" alluding to the leader and subaltern of a celebrated gang of highwaymen and house robbers, then the terror of the surrounding country.

"No, then, sir; nothing o' the kind; an' if Cushneiche came, maybe he wouldn't rise the thrifle so asy."

"Then Dick has got into some scrape or other?"

"Throth no, sir; no scrape in life; only—Ristharde!"—calling and beckoning to his son,—"only, your honour, it's where we war comin' this mornin', was to ax your adwice on the head o' getting the gorçoon we tould you of—marred;" letting the word at last slip out, half in confidence, half shyly, as it were.

"Oh; which of the lads do you mean, Darby?"

"Musha, then, sir, the boy is to the fore, only the shyness an' the shame won't let him show himself forenent you:—Ristharde!" raising his voice, and increasing his gesticulation —"musha, Ristharde! you ownshuck o' the divil, come here, I tell you."

Slowly and sheepfacedly advanced Ristharde, a big man (notwithstanding his father's appellation) of more than thirty years of age, clad in his working clothes, much the worse of

* Swift-foot.

the wear ; loosely wrapped in the great blue Irish top-coat ; and still holding his head down, and twirling his "caubeen" between his hands. He seemed fresh out of the mire of a fallow-field lately drenched in rain; his attire, his brogues, his gigantic hands, crusted with the soil ; nay, however he had contrived it should happen, his strong "raven hair" had also become smeared and clotted with wet clay, which, either from profuse perspiration, or a smart shower, subsequently resolved itself into a liquid state, and now ran in streaks down his face. Bashfully, we have said, this graceful bridegroom came on at his father's repeated summons ; apparently as bashful, indeed, as a green-horn of seventeen placed in the same situation, and feeling himself, from tender years and unimportance in the world, unfitted to it ; yet some of this excessive modesty and mopishness might not have been quite so natural to Ristharde as he was willing people should think.

"Ha, Dick—so, you are for a change?"—resumed "the masther," when "the boy" was at last "to the fore."

"Sorrow's the much myself knew about it, sir," answered Ristharde, "until about half an hour agone, when my father came into the field, an' tould me it was all settled, an' axed me to throw down the spade an' go with him, face to face, to the colleen herself, an' stop a start on the road, an' tell you the news, sir."

"Well ; I'm obliged by your visit ; but do you think you are fine enough, Dick, for your other visit,—to the sweetheart?"

"Sorrow a bit but I think I am, sir ; sure we won't be for cajoulin the poor colleen with the Sunday clothes on us, but let her see us as we are, in the week days, for the year round."

"Very fair and honourable. Who is the girl, Dick?"

"Musha, sir, she's the daughter o' one Mickle Tobin, sir : a clane, clever colleen, though we say it that shouldn't," answered Darby : a girl o' the Tobins ; the Tobins o' the Hill ; dacent people ; an' as nate a girl as ever dhruv a slip of a pig to a fair : sure your honour knows them we mane."

"I do : you speak of Kitty Tobin, foster-sister to Mr. Redmond, here?"

"No doubt bud you have her, sir ; the self-same for all the world : an' so, sir"—he stopped, looked down, then

askance on Ristharde, and, sidling to him, began to elbow the bridegroom to speak for himself.

"Musha, asy, father, asy," whispered Ristharde.

"Asy, *you*, I tell you, you big bosthoon," Darby broke out, "an' tell Square Pratt, wid your own ugly mouth, what's the rason o' your comin' here at all."

"Why, then, just to ax his honour's pardon for giving him the invite to the weddin', God bless him; and what else 'ud bring me here?" at last said Ristharde, courageously.

"Yes, your honour, that's it," added Darby, bowing and grinning.

"Well, Dick, I'll be your guest."

"Thankee, sir, an' long life to you: an' the young misthress, sir,—God preserve her kind heart an' her comely face! —Miss Nelly, sir—sure you wouldn't be for lavin her out, when it's to her, above all the ladies in the parish, poor Kitty 'ill be comin', I'm thinkin', for some of the convaniencies o' the white dhress, an' other things, for the weddin'? musha, our hearts 'ud be heavy without her."

"Miss Pratt will be happy to oblige you and Kitty, in any way, I answer for it, Dick."

"Thankee again, sir;" put in Darby; "an' sure we're thryin' to get her aq'ls, at laste, to sit forenent her, sir, at the weddin'; there's the strange lord's daughter—its a lord, or barrow-knight, or somethin' after that manner, I believes they call him—an' she's his daughter, or a sisther's child, any how; there's her, sir, that was so good to us, along wid Miss Nelly, when your honour stayed that long start out o' the counthry, an' when the sickness, an' the throuble of every kind was in the poor cabin; an' sure, tho' it's not our right, as any of her tenants or her people, to ax the convanience, she wo'nt refuse us, out of a good heart, for as lofty and as grand as she is."

"Choose your guests as you like, Darby; we go to oblige you."

"Och, no fear o' that, sir—an' there's the ould sthrange lord himself, if we could get a hoult of him, 'ud be fit for your own honour to make up to; but, musha, little chance of it, he's so shy o' comin' out, an' so fond of his books, we hear."

"Then the old count still persists in the life of seclusion and bad neighbourhood, which he led before I last went to Dublin, Darby?"

"Musha, sir, more and more; sence the night he come among us, afther buying the estate, now two years agone, come next Asther, down to this blessed day, not a neighbour, or a neighbour's child ever set eyes on him, I b'lieve, barrin' a gorçoon that might be for climbin' up the garden wall of an evenin', an' so had a peep at his honour, walkin' up an' down, or hidin' in a summer-house in the corner. But no help for that. Hard to dhraw blood from a turnip; an' there's as good fish in the sey as ever was caught, sir; an' so, if your honour has no demur to Masther Redmond, there, he 'll be handy by you, at any rate, an' is'n't to be left out for the wide world."

"Mr. Redmond answers for himself:—Redmond, what do you say?"

During the latter part of this dialogue, the person spoken to had turned to the mantelpiece, and, leaning his arm on it, relapsed into a fit of abstraction. Now quietly looking up, he asked to have the question renewed; it was accordingly put, a second time, in the best possible shape, by Darby and Ristharde together; but the young man answered he was sorry he could not attend. While, with half-closed eyes, Mr. Pratt looked askance at Redmond, as if to make out the motive of a refusal, not to have been anticipated, the bridegroom and his father poured forth together a loud, affectionate, and plaintive remonstrance. But with no effect. The youth persisted in a polite denial; and not even reminding him that "sure Kitty was his own fosther-sisther," could induce him to withdraw it. So, after naming the evening, one a week off, upon which they hoped to see Mr. and Miss Pratt at their nuptial feast, Darby and Ristharde bowed themselves away from the window, in a manner that showed much disappointment and sorrow at their last failure.

But before the reader is introduced to the rustic wedding, partly as humble preparation for which the first chapter has been written, he will please to follow, with us, the closing of the present evening in Mr. Pratt's house.

After the suitors had withdrawn, the young man resumed his leaning and thoughtful position at the mantelpiece, and Mr. Pratt continued to stand, his back half turned to him, at the open window, looking out upon his ample lawn, as if mentally occupied too. Neither spoke a word; and, for some time, neither moved. At last, while Redmond still remained

motionless, his companion turned from the window to an escritoire, unlocked and opened it, and sat down, as if no one had been present, to look over some papers. Candles were brought in; and still there was a silence, not broken until a servant, in modest though rich livery, appeared at the door to announce dinner. Both gentlemen roused themselves, and issued into the dining-room.

"Miss Pratt keeps her chamber, and we dine alone, Redmond," said Mr. Pratt, as he sat to table.

"Is Miss Pratt so ill, sir?" asked Redmond, with the only interest of manner that day observable in him.

"Only a slight headache; nothing serious;" and dinner went on in silence. It was over; the servant motioned out of the room; and Mr. Pratt, after filling his glass, pushed the decanter to Redmond.

"I'm not inclined to drink wine this evening, sir," pushing it back.

"Indeed? that's a new resolution, Redmond."

"It is, sir." His head was down as he said this; Mr. Pratt measured him with one of his peculiar looks, but added nothing. When he was about to fill his glass a second time, "Redmond," he continued, "I didn't think you would have refused to oblige these poor people to-day. May I ask why you cannot accompany us to their wedding-feast? Something of the same reason that keeps you from the glass of good claret, I suppose."

"Much the same, Mr. Pratt: but let us end this cross-questioning; I'm tired of it. The plain fact is, sir, I cannot feel, after your information of yesterday, that I have a right any longer to revel it at other people's cost, as hitherto I have done: and indeed my resolution is almost taken to withdraw myself from this place, and try to fashion out, with my own hands, whatever lot I am doomed to, rather than live——"

His voice sunk, and he stopped. His companion was silent a moment, and then spoke. "What *is* the matter with you, Redmond? I'll not say you deal unkindly by any one in indulging in these fancies; but what do you wish me to do? Could I—you force me to ask the question—could I have better discharged my duty to you, from your childhood to the present hour? At school, and at college, you had the allowance as well as the education of a gentleman."

"I know it, sir, I know it, and am not forgetful; but with the secret you kept from me, and half of which you still keep, perhaps all that attention was as injudicious as kind. Yes, the education and, for the moment, the maintenance of a gentleman, without the claims of one; that I experienced."

"And why not the claims of one, Redmond? The most obscure individual may, in these happy countries, rationally propose to himself the attainment of the rank and character of a gentleman: to talents, honour, and industry no elevation is denied; besides, as my adopted son——"

"Mr. Pratt," interrupted the youth, "tell me, in one word, why must I not inquire of you the real name and situation of the man whom you say was my father? why am I left a prey to the horrible doubts your refusal starts in my mind?"

"Now, Redmond, you are in an uneven humour, because, on some late occasions, I thought it my duty to press a renewal of your studies in the honourable profession your own early bias preferred, and of which, in my early manhood, I was, myself, no disreputable member: but, perhaps, I should call your boyish turn for the bar a fancy, or a whim, rather than settled inclination: or, perhaps, the discovery that Blackstone wrote Poetry——"

"Pardon, me, sir; what you insist upon as the cause of my present uneven temper, as you call it, I do not waste a thought about; whenever you exhorted me to be studious, I felt you meant me well; and that was all. Pray tell me, Mr. Pratt, tell me this, at least—was my parent as poor as you say he was unfortunate?—am I absolutely bounden to your charity for my education and bringing up?"

"I have before satisfied you on that head, Redmond: when, before his death, your father committed—that is, sent you to my care, he also had conveyed into my hands a sum of money sufficient for sending you to school and college, as you ought to be sent, with an overplus of about a thousand pounds to assist you in a profession."

"Then he was not 'unfortunate,' sir, from a very mean lot or station, at least? Did he hold the rank of a gentleman, Mr. Pratt? had he lands, or a profession, or was he in business?"

"Answers to these questions you must excuse me giving, Redmond."

"Again, sir, I ask—I demand, why?"

"For your own sake—for your own peace of mind and respectability."

"Respectability!—sir, you ought to explain, now at least—what, sir!—either my father or myself, then—oh! for God's sake, Mr. Pratt, relieve me of this torture—perhaps—perhaps, sir, my birth was dishonourable?—legally and morally dishonourable?"

"I do not believe it was."

"Then to know who my father was—and to have it known I am his son—*that* would destroy my peace of mind and respectability?—*that* is the meaning of your term 'unfortunate'—my father was unfortunate through his own fault—through crime—depravity?"

"Redmond, it will be useless to continue your questions, in any shape, or however modified."

"But, sir, your silence leaves me to imply, as fully as your explanation could, what you would have me believe he was."

"What I would have you believe, boy?—the language you use to me is new."

"Perhaps, sir; but there are new reasons for it."

"Ay, indeed!"

"Sir, I do not believe my father committed acts that could disgrace me, his son."

"And I have never said he did."

"But, Mr. Pratt, I remark again that you leave me to imply as much: and now pray hear me on. Why, until within these few days, did you lead me to understand that I was the son of a relation, dead in the West Indies?"

"For the very reason that now ties up my tongue as to the positive identity and character of your parent: and I was surprised out of my retraction of that story, Redmond—you had vexed me by your persevering idleness and inattention to my wishes, and I told you so much of the truth as you know, in order to spur your pride and vanity to a manly exertion; now I must regret having been so imprudent, and having given you so much *unnecessary* pain."

"Then, sir, I am in no degree related to you?"

"In no degree."

"And you persist, Mr. Pratt, in withholding from me my real condition, my father's real condition, when he lived—my real name, in fact—I am not even to receive, at your hands, the poor justice of——"

"Foolish boy, curb your passion, and correct your language. Listen to me. It was your father's last request, conveyed to me——"

"*Conveyed* to you, sir? and I was *committed* to your care?—did you know my father?—were you personally acquainted with him?"

"I never saw him."

"Indeed, sir? and how, then, may I ask, did he come to select you as my—guardian?"

"Through a mutual friend."

"What is that friend's name, sir?"

"It were useless to inform you; for he, too, is dead."

"You, then, Mr. Pratt, are singly acquainted with this mystery of my parentage?"

"I do not believe any other human being shares it with me."

"And are absolutely determined to hold it to yourself, sir?"

"Immoveably determined. Listen, I say. It was your parent's last request that his station, character, family, and even name, should for ever be concealed from his son."

"And that, too, sir, I take leave to doubt:" the young man rose from the table, pale, and his eye and manner indicating a strong and obstinate purpose: he had advanced a few steps, as if to address himself to Mr. Pratt in such a way as could not be resisted, and that gentleman, also rising, had answered his last remark with—"Impertinent and imprudent boy, what do you mean?"—when, suddenly, the youth checked himself; drew his hand across his face; paused; and when he at last spoke, tears were in his eyes, and his broken voice sounded in supplication rather than threat.

"Imprudent I am, sir, and was about to be more so: but now I implore you to listen to me. I have said new reasons had occurred for my present mood; let me tell you some of them. You knew of my chance meeting with Count O'Ruark, in consequence of which, though scarce ever permitted into his company, he invited me to use his grounds, in shooting or coursing, and his library for reading; you know how very pleasant, nay, how dear, those privileges were to me; well, sir, yesterday, just before your most painful intimation, I received from the Count this note;" he produced one, and read aloud, as follows:—

"Count O'Ruark was very happy to have thrown open his house to Mr. Redmond Redmond, as a slight return for the personal services received at Mr. Redmond's hands, so long as he remained ignorant that a certain imputation had been thrown upon Mr. Redmond's birth; which imputation—(for Count O'Ruark is a plain-dealing man)—it will be well to remove before Mr. Redmond again makes his compliments to any of the family at Pleasant View."

After reading this note, both remained silent a moment.

"Whatever the old misanthrope has heard," at length resumed Mr. Pratt, "must be a false and weak rumour; for, as I before told you, Redmond, no second person alive, that I know of, except myself, could have circulated the truth; and if I refuse to satisfy you on the subject, it is pretty evident I am not likely to satisfy others."

"I did not mean, sir, to accuse you of being the author of this report, whatever it is; I could not mean so; but thus, you see, the case stands: without your concurrence or knowledge, an undefined slur is cast upon me; the real history of my birth and parentage would at once enable me to crush the slander—I am assured it would—the blood that runs to throb full at my heart when I speak the word, tells me as much. Impart to me, then, that real history: I implore your assistance, sir, as a benefit, a mercy; I ask it as an act of humane justice."

"Are you sure, Redmond, my compliance would enable you to accomplish your purpose?"

"Heaven and earth, sir! that means it would not—it confirms the Count's note—it gives authority for other slights—sneers, whispers, and winks, which, from time to time I have encountered, particularly in that paltry village yonder;—it says, you too believe I am the son of a degraded man!—does it, Mr. Pratt, does it?"—the dark side of his temper again lowered out, and again he advanced, frowning and threatening.

"Redmond, I shall never answer another query on the present subject."

"Answer this, then!" cried Redmond, snatching out of his bosom the fragment of another letter; "but first, sir, let me remind you of a few things. Your excellent wife, Mrs. Pratt, has now been dead about two years, as I reckon."

"About two years," muttered the other, his side-long look trying to fix the scrawl that Redmond kept closed in his grasp.

"And you were in Dublin when she died in this house, sir?"

A cold assent was given.

"And received letters from her, while in Dublin, written upon her death-bed, in this house?"

"What can you mean, sir?" advancing upon him. "What! have you been spying and pillaging among my papers, youngster?"

"Spying and pillaging, Mr. Pratt! Sir, this is new phraseology, indeed, from your lips, your guarded, prudent, and bland lips—quite a new view of your character——"

"Puppy, cur, give me that paper!" cried Mr. Pratt, suddenly stamping his way to him, while his eyes flashed and his lips quivered.

"Are you really so anxious to possess it, sir? And does its sight make you so pale and tremulous? You cannot get it yet, however, until you hear, first, how it came into my possession, next, 'till you hear me read it. I did not spy among your papers, Mr. Pratt; I did not—(how proudly and contemptuously my nature repels the charge)——"

"It need not, however, quite so proudly," interrupted the elder, now restored to his self-possession.

"Explain your meaning there, sir!—explain, this moment!"

"Tut, silly boy," turning from him as he advanced, and taking a chair.

"Well, sir, then hear me go on. This scrap of a letter I found, but a few hours ago, near to where you had been sitting to your escritoire, in the parlour. I picked it up, to place it out of the hands of the servants; in doing so, my own name—the name you have chosen to give me, I should rather say—struck my eye, in your wife's handwriting; a natural and, I hope, excusable curiosity prompted me to run over the lines, and then I read what I now read to you: 'tis but a part of a letter, sir, and seems the conclusion of one. There is no clue to the first few words, which, however, are, 'could have died in poverty, much happier;' but afterwards, sir, we have an almost unbroken sentence.—'Yes, Joshua, on my death-bed, and about to face my God, nothing distresses my soul but the wrong done to this poor Redmond: my only hope and comfort is, that while you live you will be a father to him, and, ere you find yourself in my present situation, insure to him, by a legal act, all that you believe to

be his right. Perhaps heaven would allow another mode of arrangement, without injury to our own child ; perhaps she and he ——' here, sir, the scrap ends ; now, can you explain it? Now, will you yield me the satisfaction I have hitherto vainly begged for?"

"I believe, indeed, I must, Redmond, though for your own sake, I wish this necessity had not occurred for doing so: the prospect of being compelled to answer your questions, when just now I saw the paper in your hands, threw me off my guard, and, I can assure you, exclusively on account of your individual interests, caused me to express myself in a manner I must regret. But come ; let us to the point, at last ; my confession now becomes indispensable in order to protect my own character from suspicions that your hasty interpretation of the lines may render probable ; wait here a moment ; I will instantly return."

He took a light ; left the dining-room with a composed step ; entered the parlour, and soon returned, holding a torn letter in his hand.

"To give you full satisfaction, Redmond, let us first read the whole of the letter, of which that scrap is a part; ay, here it is; pray, just lay your *morceau* to this torn edge, that we may judge if any words are missing on either side."

Redmond, allowing this request, stepped to the table, and applied his slip to the torn letter ; and, while in the act of doing so, Mr. Pratt suddenly snatched it from between his fingers, and flung it into the blazing chimney, where, in a second, it was ashes, saying—"There, good Redmond—I beg your pardon—but that is the most charitable way to settle the question."

The young man stood fixed in consternation. Surprise at such an act from a man whose character, until within a few days past, he had from childhood respected, tended, as much as his feelings with regard to himself, to keep him some moments silent. But he at length found words.

"Well, Mr. Pratt ; now, at least, I believe you have reasons, other than those yielded to me, for your caution. Now, sir, I firmly believe you have slandered the memory of my unknown father ; and, to quote your wife's dying words, wronged my father's son."

"Don't be a fool, Redmond; think and believe what you like, but keep respectful language. You are dependent upon me."

"I can keep no respectful language for the man whose assertions and character I have proof are false and dishonourable; and I am not dependent upon you, sir. Passing your story of a thousand pounds given to you, for my education and so forth, I am convinced I am not your debtor, so far: lest I should be, in future, we part—part this moment, and for ever."

"Insolent fool!—be not as rash as you are ungrateful and saucy.—Part? why, where would you go? where, except to enlist with Cushneiche, on the mountains?"

"Wherever I go, it shall be from under a roof that, in honour, and with a due respect for myself, should no longer shelter me."

"Though after all your fine proud blood, Master Redmond, it may be hail-fellow-well-met, between ye," muttered Mr. Pratt, as if only following up his own last speech.

"What do you say, there again, sir? what dreadful and mysterious insult dare you insinuate?"

"Dare?"

"Yes, sir, dare." He stepped forward; Mr. Pratt rose to ring the bell—"But spare yourself any apprehension, sir; I despise to repeat the word; we part, I say; some other evidences of my father's identity may, perhaps, be found, notwithstanding your stories, Mr. Pratt."

"Silly fellow, stay where you are: when you discover—if you ever can—who and what that father was, you may congratulate yourself but little on your success."

"Hah!" exclaimed Redmond, seizing him, "you shall tell me that who and what before I leave you."

"Madman, let me go, or take the consequence in an answer that will curse you."

"I will not!—speak away!—let the curse come, if it be to come—speak, sir!"

"Hearken, then—" as the young man began to treat him rudely, "your father was, I believe, a common robber, and died, I think, at the hands of the law."

The doleful scream of a man's voice, bursting from Redmond, instantly echoed through the house; and, a moment after, the young man had broke away from Mr. Pratt, flinging him some yards distant, and was bounding down the avenue, night and storm, as black and vehement as his own passion, gathering around his path.

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Pratt stood pale and shaking from agitation, and, indeed, the violence he had undergone, when, as if summoned by the cry that, as has been said, rung through the mansion, the light figure of a girl, dressed in white muslin, glided to the open parlour door, and there checking herself, stood with clasped hands, looking in upon him. Almost at the same moment, another person, a tall, middle-aged man, clothed in shabby black, and having a flaming red face, and vulgar features, appeared behind her, easily peeping over the girl's shoulders, and also directing his glances,—which, as any one might suppose, were filled with a simple, honest anxiety—towards Mr. Pratt. At the first sound of their approach, that gentleman roused himself; with a quick step walked to the door, and, as he took the young lady's hand to lead her in, said to her companion—

"After him, Cotteril; follow the silly boy, and bring him back instantly." Cotteril, with an expression of great devotion, and as if his simple nature was half convinced of the importance of his commission, was moving off. "Stop; tell him I forgive all his rudeness and insult, and promise him a full explanation if he will but return this moment;—tell him, too, that what I last said is not to be minded; that he compelled me to say something as a punishment for his intemperance;—quick, Bill—and harkee"—he quitted his fair charge a moment, who instantly sank into a chair; stepped out to Cotteril, whispered two or three sentences, which the man met by his usual affectation of good-nature and simplicity, and then closing one eye leisurely, as a token of comprehension, he plodded away. Mr. Pratt took a seat by the girl's side—"Now, what is the reason of this Ellen?" he began; "you know such agitation is as dangerous to you as it is indelicate."

"Father," she answered, trembling, and looking as white as her floating dress, "could I have helped it? after getting my wretched secret from me, as, by kindness and commands together you have done, would you expect me to remain up stairs, alone, and uninformed about him and you, when I

heard his terrible outcry, and saw him, from my window, rushing down the avenue?—Oh, sir, what has happened?—Where has he gone at this time of night?"

"Well, my dear child," taking her hand, "I should not have been so surprised at your appearance, but I forgot a little; my temper and nerves were shaken; and nothing of importance has happened. You know Redmond is hasty at times, when his dark nature sends out a flash; and while I was again urging him to exert himself in the way that his time of life now makes imperative, he answered me sullenly, and, as I thought, disrespectfully. I retorted, which I should not have done; he quite lost his self-command; very harsh language ensued between us; and at last he left the house in a fit of independence, I suppose; and that's all. Don't look so frightened, Ellen; Cotteril will soon bring him back; I am ready to forgive him, and the morning will see us as happy as ever."

"God send it, sir," was her only reply, except that showers of tears now relieved her previous terror.

"Yes, my love, all shall go on well; nothing shall harm our poor Redmond, silly and thoughtless as he is; for your sake I can pardon him a worse extravagance; so, cheer up, Nelly, cheer up."

"Sir," after a pause, and trying to check her tears, "your goodness to him—to us both—is not the only thing required for my happiness—I believe, I fear it is not."

"Then, only tell me what else."

"And I begin to think—oh, sir, I am sure—that I ought, if I regard my own respectability—to say nothing of my peace of mind—endeavour—to—" fresh tears followed.

"To what my child? speak up plainly to your father, as you have ever done; it will be best for all parties. Did your dear mother live, I should never think of winning or desiring your confidence on so delicate a subject; but lonely and—but for each other—companionless as we stand in the world, our hearts ought to be fully shared together; speak, Ellen, and you will find me try, with a woman's delicacy, joined to a father's interest, to fill your mother's place. Come, now, what would you tell me?"

"What I am ashamed and humiliated, as well as shocked, to tell, sir—what, girl and lady as I am, I ought to die sooner than acknowledge with one tear; yet they will come. Oh,

sir, after all your kindness, indulgence, and encouragement to my foolish feelings, Redmond does not love, does not care for your poor Ellen."

"Pho, child, is that all? Come, I know better; I have experience in affairs of the heart, among men at least, and from my observation of the boy, you tell an idle story. Do you think, Ellen, I should have encouraged feelings that (tender and delicate as your constitution is) must, if disappointed, injure you, unless I became assured of Redmond's inclinations? This much you may have observed.. From a sense of what he supposes a dependent situation, working on a proud and, sometimes, a dark heart, but certainly a noble nature, the lad endeavours, no doubt, to hide his sentiments: he must not aspire, he thinks, to the child of his benefactor, and of a man high in the world; but, let him alone; we shall find means, without compromising your dignity, my love, to give him more confidence."

"I think little, sir, of such appearances as you describe; I have never seen them, or they have escaped my remark; that is not it at all; Redmond loves another lady."

"Absurd, Ellen; the ravings of some of the little tortures of a sweet girl's first love. What other? What lady? He is not even acquainted with another: whom can you mean?"

"Miss D'Arnell, the foreign lady at Pleasant View."

"Why, he does not know her, or scarcely knows her; they may, indeed, have met in the library of the old eccentric Count, or on her walks, but could not have exchanged a word together: she is always attended by her *bonne*, her governess, her duenna, you know; and then she is so high, so lofty; you have, yourself, told me so; he durst not have thought of her."

"He loves her, father—I cannot be deceived in that; everything he says or does, for the last year, assures me; he loves —and not Ellen."

"My dear Nelly, 'tis a mistake; Redmond has it not in his nature to be an inconstant, and you know how truly he has sighed for you since you were children."

"I thought so; but now believe I have been mistaken."

"What! not credit his own words? Has he not often whispered it, my child?"

"Never, since we were children, almost. Oh, sir, we grew up in a sad mistake together. The servants, your friends—

nay, sir, yourself taught us by simple words—silly ones—such as I am ashamed that I remember—to consider ourselves, even when infants, as—'tis foolish, indeed—yet I do remember it—as particular friends. After that, while we read, and learned, and rode, and ran about together, mere boy and girl, he used to repeat the absurd phrases he had heard, and I—for I believe girls know soonest the meaning of such words—I thought more of them than Redmond. But never, since his parting for college at fifteen, never did he repeat this kind of language to me."

"No, love; because, upon his return, he had learned to think a little, and his respect and awe checked his former little freedoms."

"Because he had learned to think, sir, I know; think, and correct his childish error. Do not deceive yourself, dear father; had he loved, under the deepest disguise of reserve, I must have seen it; for, I blush to tell you, sir, I watched him closely; through fear, awe, indifference, coldness, I had surely found out his love for me. No, sir; kind, tender of my weak state of health, and frank and friendly as a brother, Redmond has been ever since—nothing more. Nothing more, until within the last year, when, after the Count invited him to Pleasant View, he met Miss D'Arnell—and oh, father, he could not help adoring her! She and I have saluted each other, and spoken an occasional word, upon our chance meetings in the cabins of one or two of your poor tenants; and this much I will allow,—she is a queen, a goddess! I allow more—she is better suited, by nature and natural qualities of mind, if not of heart, to win and meet Redmond's high spirit, than your poor, weak, trembling Ellen." As she again wept, her head fell on her father's shoulder.

At this moment, as he was about farther to reply, the red face and tall awkward figure of Cotteril reappeared at the parlour door; Mr. Pratt removed her head, rose up, and, perceiving the man alone, faced him with his back to Ellen, and gave him a significant wink as he demanded an account of his mission.

"All sthraight an' fair, sir, as a body might say, afther a manner," replied Cotteril, speaking, as the neighbours termed it, in the utmost *lauchiness** of accent, as he returned his

* This word has many meanings - one of them good nature.

master's signal: "I seen the young masther, as your honour bid me, an' discoorsed him too, the poor young slob, an' never fear him, but he'll be here in a jiffy; only he tould me to say that, as it was so late, he'd take a bed in the village for the rest o' the night, an' see your honour, an' Miss Nelly, God bless her, at the tey an' toast, in the mornin'."

"There, love, you hear that," said Mr. Pratt, reapproaching his daughter, and again taking her hand; "and come, now, and let me lead you towards your chamber; you require sleep and rest, Ellen."

"I do indeed, father," as she rose to walk out at the door; "but will sleep and rest come when they are most wanted, sir?"

"Ellen," resumed her father, stopping to speak in an earnest whisper, in the passage, "you know that while I love you as tenderly as ever a widowed father loved an orphan child, I am a man of some sense, and understand what I say before I say it; therefore attend to me; this boy loves you, notwithstanding all your whims, and, if you have no great objection, shall make you his wife. Good night, my love, and go dream of him." He motioned to kiss her cheek, and Ellen meekly held out her pale but beautiful one for her father's salute, as, with a sigh drawn from the depths of her heart, she merely said—"Good night, sir."

Mr. Pratt listened until he heard her light and languid step enter her chamber; then he walked back into the parlour, cautiously shut the door, with a pompous and heavy stride passed Cotteril, whose ricketty length was drawn up against the wall, in a corner; flung himself into a chair, and bending his brows till they almost hid his fish-shaped grey eyes, asked,

"Well, sir, he would not come with you, nor have you seen him?"

"It was not all a sham story, your honour: I seen him, sure enough, but hadn't the speech of him somehow or someway: and afore I could have it, another came across him, and they turned out o' my sighth, together."

"Who was that person?"

"Maybe your honour could throw a guess at him?"

Turning a piece of tobacco in his mouth, and stopping to deposit some of its distillation under the grate, Mr. Cotteril advanced across the room in his own peculiar pace. While carrying his person along, he rested upon one leg the whole

weight of his body, then dwelt upon that leg, before he put the other in motion, as if there existed a necessity to use due consideration between every step, or a fear that one innocent limb might bring its fellow into a scrape; and, perhaps upon something of the same principle, he always seemed pondering as he went forward, his eyes generally cast down; which habit, together with the constant stirring of his long under jaw, gave him the appearance of a poor harmless kine, in a cogitative mood. At the least word addressed to him, no matter by whom, he would, however, half elevate his regards, and send them round, with a semblance, at least, of great good-will to every person and every thing they fell upon; and his way of returning the slightest salute was bland and innocent in the extreme.

"If I could guess," answered his master to his question, "why should I inquire of you?"

"Why, then, it's a thing I'm apt to think, sir, you'd be like enough to make three or four offers afore you'd hit on id."

Mr. Cotteril, having said so much, drew a chair in a sneaking way to the fire, to make himself quite at home during the conference that was to take place; again emitted some of his distilled tobacco under the grate, and setting his side to the blaze, extended the fingers of his right hand, in the way that the action may be observed to be performed by a pleased cat, in nearly the same situation; while, with a switch he held in his left hand, and which was a general appendage to his equipment, he described semicircles on the carpet as he talked. Persons of consideration are occasionally obliged to tolerate such familiarity from their confidants.

"Some way, or some how," he went on, "it cums about by chance, or by good-loock, or somethin' o' the sort, that when I'm bent on goin' any where, to do any thing, by day or by night, there's a knack sarves my turn to send me the right road, masther."

He stopped a moment for "the masther's" assent to this proposition.

"Yes; go on," said Mr. Pratt.

"The same thing, afther a manner, happened to me this bout, sir. Makin' my way wid a hearty good will, for the rason that I was on your honour's arrand, I sthrikes up the hill-road, that sarves by way of a short cut to the village;—

an' I was a passing' by Breedge Sheehy's cabin, about half way to the top o' the hill—a hard-workin' ould woman is the same Breedge, sir; given to industhry; an' she does have a little bottle behind the noggins on the dhresser for a friend; it's the widow o' Dan Sheehy that they hanged, people say wrongfully enough—you'd know the cabin, sir, I'd make free to think?"

"Yes; it stands the nearest to the wild spot of ground on the summit of the hill."

"So it does, your honour. Well, just as I was a turnin' the gable o' the house, I hears somebody or other breaking through the loose stones and furze, at my right hand undher me, on the slope o' the same hill, comin' up, like enough, from the other road, the smooth carriage road that runs all round the hill, to the village, too; an' as the step was in a hurry, I had my own rasons for hidin' to let it pass me by; an' the man jumped across the little rough road, an' never cried stop, but made for the very place your honour spakes of, on the crown o' the hill entirely; an' sure, it was our own poor slob, Masther Redmond, an' nobody else; running like the hunted hare, only no one hunting him, barrin' himself, I'm thinkin'."

"Well, you followed him?"

"Faicks and I did so, your honour; bud wid a little caution, afther a manner, just to try an' see what he was goin' to do wid his poor bones in sich a place as that; an' I'm well behouldin' to the part I tuck, any how; maybe it makes the rason why Bill Cottheril is to the fore to tell your honour the quare things that cum about; for when I stole, ever so asy, round an' round the bit o' waste ground, I hard his voice high wid another man, afore I seen either iv 'em; an' when I did get the first sight o' the both, musha, never a mind I had to go nearer; an' afther a mortial spell o' the talk, in the wind an' the dhrizzle, the man an' he turned farther off, an' I never seen 'em since."

"And now, who was that man, Cotteril?"

Mr. Cotteril allowed lengthened vent to a fresh stream of tobacco-juice, spread his fingers wider asunder at the blaze, and gave his switch another sweep on the carpet ere he added—

"It was Cushneiche the robber."

Mr. Pratt stared at him.

"Nonsense, man ; you are mistaken."

"Maybe I am, masther ; bud tho' I am no great witch of a man, all out, entirely, some how or other, I'll make bould to say that maybe I'm not mistaken, as well as maybe I am. Maybe it's myself hasn't the eyesighth good enough to see him ; an' maybe I have no right to know Masther Cushneiche, if I did see him ; maybe nothin' happened, an' maybe I didn't tell your honour iv id afore, the night o' the day when we war forced to cant an' dhrive the Meehans, poor sowls—(a kind o' thing, I may make bould to say, is agin our nature, only, your honour knows, we must do id to get our own)—an' when I was comin' along home, quite an' asy, as my way is, maybe he did'nt step up to me on the road, and grope the poor pockets, an' dhraw out the day's money, tellin' me, in the jibin' way he has, it was done to save my thigh from bein' galded wid the load ; an' then what does he do bud tear the decrees we had agin the Dooleys, into bits the size o' my nail ; an' when all was over, the blundherbush held to my jaw, that had a mouth to id, aye, by Gar, the size iv a barrel pot, while he forced me, in the civil way I had, as he tould me, to give him my hearty thanks for his throuble, all the same, afther a manner, as if it war goold he war afther given' to me, not to talk iv' takin' it from me. Yis ; maybe somehow or someway, I had no rason at all to know him."

"You are quite certain, then?"

"As sart'n, your honour, as that I feel the fire (the Lord purlong id), burnin' my hine-quarthers here."

"Were you able to hear their conversation?"

"That's the only bite that cum on us yet, sir. No, sir ; never a word could I hear, tho' I cocked the two reasonably good ears I have, as stiff as the filly in the stable, when the gorçoon is settlin' his oats in the siv' for him. It's not to be denied, anyhow, that I didn't go as near to 'em as a body might go, afther a manner, if a body hadn't a rason for keepin' a civil distance somehow ; an' it's as likely that I did go near enough, too, for hearin' o' what they said, only, some way or somehow, the wind was tattherin' an' tearin' on the top o' the place, an' dhrivin' their words twenty ways at a time, so that there was little use in listenin' ; maybe afore I cum up there might be a sort of a kind of a misundherstandin' betuxt 'em, by rason that I jist caught their voices higher at the first goin' off, nor afther ; bud when they turned

farther over the hill, in a thrack I had no mind to folly 'em on, an' left my sighth, at the same time, it was all like born brothers, one to another, I'm thinkin'."

"It is very surprising," said Mr. Pratt.

"An' that same thought, sir," continued Mr. Cotteril, "set me upon bringin' to mind the ould sayin'—'Birds of a feather flock together;' it had the face upon it, someway or somehow, as if Masther Redmond was takin' to his new ways, by coorse o' nature; an', by Gar, Bill Cottheril, says I, spakin' asy and quite to myself, it might happen, Bill, you war tellin' the thruth, unknownst to yourself the day afore yistherday, when you war goin' on, afther the masther's ordhers, to put it upon the ould Count's sarvants, an' other honest people in the village down there, as to how the gorcoon war pedigreed, an' the sort of a breed he sprung from."

"You have no right, Cotteril, to assume the rare credit of having told truth on that single occasion; I informed you that I wished to get the rumour circulated, myself standing clear of it, for a certain purpose; a domestic one; which I believe you guess."

"Yis, sir, maybe I do; God bless your honour, that laves such a thing in poor Bill Cottheril's hands to put the guess on; yis, the darlin' young misthress, the Lord be good to her, every day she gets up! an' that *dhawn ordha** iv a Frinch lady, comin' here for to go to take the likin' iv our poor slob iv a boy from Miss Nelly to herself, sir;"—he arose from his seat at the fire, advanced his long wriggling body towards "the Masther," changed the switch from the left to the right hand, and continued close by the table to which Mr. Pratt sat; "Yis, sir, to be sure; bud—" suddenly dropping his left elbow on the table, and bending one leg, and stretching out the other, while his face assumed the placid simplicity which it usually wore when speaking to strangers on Mr. Pratt's concerns, and of which it could not now divest itself to Mr. Pratt himself, although they knew each other tolerably well—"It's a thing somehow or someway, that, if it wouldn't be makin' too bould, entirely—he!—ha!"—we cannot come nearer to the orthography of these two self-interrupting ejaculations, which broke from him, half sigh, half grunt, as he stretched forward his arm, and, with the point of his switch,

* A high or conceited person.

endeavoured to reach a bit of straw that his own brogues had smuggled into the room—"too bould, entirely," he resumed, "to ax your honour the rason that's in id—" another pause, in another energetic effort to reach the straw, which a looker-on might suppose to be the chief object of his desires—"if it's such a thing as that your honour is downwright in arnest about, afther a manner, to let the gorçoon make up to Miss Nelly, good fort'n be in her road—why you'd be sendin' a body to whisper them quare stories about him?" And the last words seemed to escape merely as if they slipped from him in his repeated efforts to reach the straw, which, as they were uttered, he at last succeeded in twitching from its place.

"I'll satisfy you on that point, honest Bill, for I am aware it does seem rather strange," replied Mr. Pratt, scarce able to keep in a contemptuous smile at the play of face and tongue that assailed him; "and my answer involves some delicate family matters; yet, as I know you to be an old and long-tried friend of the family, I can fear little from giving you my confidence."

"Faicks, yis; your honour knows poor Bill Cottheril is loyal to the back-bone."

"Indeed, Bill, I believe so; and therefore willingly answer the question you have just put:

"Long before I could, from observation, interpose my authority to prevent it, Redmond had, by constant assiduity, won the affections of Miss Pratt."

"Oh, the thief o' the world; what impedince he had to do sich a thing, sir."

"On account of the great indulgence with which I treated the boy, she was not on her guard against him, particularly after his last return from College, when he came to us certainly an intelligent, well-mannered, and, in his person, a fine young man; and so, Cotteril, Miss Pratt's tender nature at last fully owned his merits and attentions."

"Musha, the poor crature; the poor young misthress, sir; an' Miss Nelly owned it, sir?"

"But, as you before rightly conjectured, Master Redmond soon after met the strange lady at the Count's, and his love and his professions were forgotten."

"Oh the young thief, I say again, sir—I wish we had a hoult of him, a second time, your honour, jest for his good."

"You know the delicate state of your young lady's health;

you know my apprehensions about it, and my great affection for her;—you know the anxiety that, as a father, I must feel upon the subject; and therefore, Cotteril, you will understand why I instructed you to whisper such rumours as, upon reaching the old Count's ear, would be likely to put an end to Mr. Redmond's visits at Pleasant View."

"Avoch, I do undherstand, sir;—musha yis; if the poor young misthress hard tell of it, it would go nigh to break the heart in her body, sir."

"That's precisely what I wish to prevent. I hope to bring back, by any means—you mind me, Cotteril—by any means—this young lad to his most honourable line of conduct, before Miss Pratt knows that she has been slighted, deserted, and insulted."

"Musha, to be sure, sir, an' why not? God purlong her days, an' look down on her; an,' by any manes at all, your honour says, afther a manner, somehow?"

"Yes, Cotteril."

"Why then, yis, wid all my heart, sir; only, afther a manner, we don't *fasilhaun** your honour, out-an'-out entirely."

"If what is already done has no effect, it will be necessary to get him into our power, Bill."

"Faiks so it will, sir; your honour jest said it."

Cotteril smilingly waited to hear a speedy explanation of "the Masther's" plan for getting Redmond, as he had said, into his power; but rather to his disappointment, Mr. Pratt was, for some time, silent; and when at last he resumed, honest Bill did not immediately see the drift or connection of the new with the former topic.

"This Cushneiche, Bill——"

"Yis, sir; this bad boy of a Cushneiche."

"How long before I last returned from Dublin had the fellow been in the country?—only a few weeks, I think you have said."

Cotteril acquiesced.

"And, from all you can learn, he is not a native of these parts?"

"Neither he nor his next in command, sir, the Yallow Sailor, as they calls him; nor like the boys o' the country, either, though many's the bouchal about the place is listed

* Comprehend.

wid 'em, people say, since they come among us, somehow or someway; only Cushneiche himself sometimes dhresses like one kind o' body, sometimes like another, an' is never known to look the laste resemblin' a labourin' man, as the others do afther a manner; and the Yallow Sailor always wears his blue jacket, more betoken the tallow face he's called afther."

"They do not rob poor and rich, indiscriminately?"

"So far from it, your honour, that, when the fit takes Cushneiche, he'll give to a poor man what he borrowed from a rich one; an' then their friends, sir, the counthry round; their recaivers, an' them that hides 'em, and gives 'em help at a pinch; faiks I hear there's some cabins we wouldn't s'pect for it that goes on with thricks o' the kind, sir."

"But I suspected them, Cotteril; and, perhaps, between us we know as much of the gentlemen altogether, as will make sure of them one of those days."

"Wid God's help, sir: tho' faiks, yer honour, we'd want sich help when it's agin the red divil we must fight, that gets Cushneiche out o' more scrapes than an ould eel, that 'ud be slippin' thro' the dhrag-net, night after night, the year round."

"No matter, he may be hauled up at last. Now, Cotteril, you are sure Mr. Redmond has joined this highway robber; you saw them meet and walk off together, quietly and confidentially?" His cabinet minister assented. "And you are ready to say as much to your neighbours to-morrow morning, so that the good people of the country may soon hear it; and you are ready to swear it too before any magistrate in the land—all without having it understood that I know a word of the matter?"

Cotteril answered that, for an "honest, quite, aisy man," no creature alive was more ready and willing to "down with an honest oath," at any time, in his honour's service.

"Then you know what you are to do the very first thing in the morning, Bill; and so drink this tumbler of wine—and good night to you, Cotteril."

With prayers for the long life and welfare of his honour and the whole family, Mr. Cotteril speedily obeyed this command, and then put himself in motion to take his ill-constructed and shuffling figure out of the room. As he gained the door, he hesitated, stopped, and said—"Good night, an' a pleasant

sleep to your honour; but, musha, sir—I ax pardon—but what's to be done wid the darlin' young misthress, God keep her, in regard o' the young masther not comin' home to the tay and toast in the mornin', as I tould her?"

"Leave that to me, Bill; you have nothing to do with it; only go to your bed."

"Oh! sorrow a thing, sir, sure enough; an' it's to your honour's self we'll lave it; an' why not? A good night, sir, an' the Lord reward you, and be good to you." He scraped himself out of the room, his face all simplicity and good nature; yet, ere he turned down the kitchen stairs to the servants' apartment, stopped once more, and added—"But my sowl to glory, if myself thinks the masther is outright as open wid me in this little business as he believes I think he is; an' I don't find it in my heart, for all he says, wid his own smooth tongue, somehow, to be satisfied on the head o' wantin' to marry that gorçoon to the young misthress by half hangin' him afore hand: no matther; he always an' ever had the two ways in him, and yet they seldom or never bamboozled poor Bill Cottheril, ather; an' may be, by a little watchin', an' keepin' our toe in our brogue, an' our own tongue in our cheek, the ball wouldn't be sthruck all his own way this hayt nather."

Mr. Pratt remained sitting alone in the dining-room long after his departure: at length he rose up, with a heavy care-freighted sigh, and getting a light, proceeded to his library. There he took down a volume of statutes, and opening it at a page to which a mark previously placed in the book at once directed him, read over, very studiously, a particular statute; then closed the volume; with his hand laid upon its cover, remained in deep thought; in some time, roused himself; returned the book to its shelf, carefully adjusting the mark; gained his sleeping-chamber; locked the door; walked into a closet; opened a strong box; took out a parchment deed; conned it over, also; dwelt, again and again, on its date, in the manner of one who sought to indulge certainty rather than in any degree to attain it; and, finally, the point of his reflections escaped him in this short and whispered soliloquy —"Yes, he shall make her his wife, if the prospect of the gallows itself can induce him. I know he does not love her, and Ellen need not have told me; but no matter; Redmond shall marry her!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE day for attending to the invitation of Darby Roach and his son arrived, and Mr. Pratt and Ellen prepared to go to Mickle Tobin's house. All guests were expected by six o'clock in the evening; and as the small farmer, Tobin, lived some miles beyond the village, while Mr. Pratt's mansion lay about the same distance from it, in an opposite direction, it was necessary to be on horseback by five at the latest, particularly as they should, at that hour, have the last light of a February evening, and escape, in its company, all chance of a meeting with Cushneiche, or any of his subjects. For the purpose of providing against his intrusion on the way home, Mr. Pratt left orders with Cotteril to call for him at the place of nuptials, about eleven o'clock, attended by a number of men, well armed.

In order that his daughter might bear him company, on the present festive occasion, Mr. Pratt had well justified his claim, expressed when the reader last found him and Cotteril confidentially discoursing, to have the arrangement of the question of Redmond's absence left entirely to himself. In fact, he had seriously informed Ellen, that after an early interview between the youth and him, the morning subsequent to his sudden flight from the house, Redmond consented to depart immediately for Dublin, to complete his college course, in consequence of having previously disclosed his passion for Ellen, and received an approbation, provided he should betake himself to studies he had long neglected, and not attempt to see her until a stipulated time. His period of probation would, however, be but a short one; only a few months in fact: and, when it had expired, Ellen might be prepared to see a fervent lover at her feet.

The girl had no reason or inclination to disbelieve her father's word; the truth of this statement she did not, therefore, doubt; and yet she heard it with that languid acquiescence of the heart which comes from a foreboding of disappointment. It never occurred to her to question the facts so stated; but she could not get Redmond before her imagination as a lover.

Meantime, while Cotteril, at his master's instance, widely whispered a very contrary account of the situation of Redmond, Mr. Pratt studiously arranged to keep the shocking story from his daughter's ear. That, according to hopes and plans he had formed, this gentleman reckoned to place her lover under her eyes, in the light and within the time he spoke of, is certain, and therefore, and if for no reason but to guard his own show of consistency, he would have taken this precaution; but there was another reason; and, although with him scarcely a more potent, yet a more amiable one; he fondly loved his gentle and drooping daughter; his fears for her health were lively and continual; and even had there been no policy in the case, assuredly he would have striven to keep her from the knowledge of a story which, whether true or false, must deeply embitter, if it did not endanger her life.

After making his fabulous communication, he exerted himself too in every way, to cheer her mind and rally her spirits; and, as part of his efforts in this view, gently insisted, against her repeated though unusual objections, that Ellen should accompany him to their tenant's wedding. Even here Mr. Pratt had a double motive. He wished to stand well with the world, and, as a first step, with his tenantry; that is, with every one of them from whom a tolerably regular discharge of rent might be expected. While the poor and unfortunate, and of course the irregular portion of his "cottiers" and small farmers were driven, and distrained, and ejected, without ceremony (Mr. Cotteril, as has been gathered from his own personal eulogy, the chief agent on all such occasions), the prosperous and thriving portion experienced smiles and urbanity from their landlord. He would salute them kindly; talk with them in a good-natured tone; give ear to their little wants, of that description which it cost him nothing to alleviate; decide all their knotty law-points, with the more authority, assumed and acknowledged, because they knew he had once been "a counsellor;" and above all, Mr. Pratt wished to get credit for the patriarchal condescension of mingling in their domestic festivities, at wedding, or christening, so that those who duly paid their arrears might never have it in their power or be disposed to call him "hard," or "an upstart." And aware that, to procure the good word of any family, it is advisable to win over the female members, Mr. Pratt, on all these accounts, encouraged

his daughter in her own voluntary wish of making happy the humble people around her, whether by assisting them, obliging them, or mixing with them; and hence, apart from his sincere anxiety to cheer Ellen by a kind of scene he knew she enjoyed, he now insisted, notwithstanding her unusual objection on the score of bad spirits, upon having her company to the Tobins.

There were, too, other little helping motives; for Mr. Pratt was not a man to do anything without well understanding why and wherefore, and nicely dividing every cause to action. Darby Roach had informed him that Miss D'Arnell might be at the wedding; and, first, he wished to observe closely the lady who, at present, seemed to stand between him and a favourite object; second, he had heard she was proud and lofty, and not likely to be a favourite with the common people, while his daughter Ellen was mild and bending, and beloved by them, far and wide, and he was anxious to have the young ladies contrasted, that Ellen might bear away all the good-will, part of which must naturally extend to himself; next, he would fain observe if Cotteril's report of Redmond's present fate had reached Miss D'Arnell, and, if so, what effect it was likely to produce upon her; and from that effect, whether or no the lady loved his protégé; and lastly—though, perhaps, we should not say lastly—he wanted to avail himself of something like a public occasion to express certain opinions touching the conduct of the boy, and his own asserted feelings towards him.

A river flowed between Mr. Pratt's house and the village through which he must pass to the place of festivity: after riding about two miles along the road that ran parallel to this river, he and Ellen had to turn to the right over the bridge which led into the village; and when about half way across, they commanded an uninterrupted view of the principal street, running before them in a continued line, against a steep and rugged ascent that was still to be their way to Tobin's house.

They had emerged, slowly walking their horses, upon the bridge, when a poor, wretched-looking man, whom both seemed with some interest to recognize, passed them from behind, at a good pace. He was about fifty years old, tall, bare-headed, with his profuse and sunburnt brown hair matted, and falling down in strings, until it met a tangled

beard, which touched his breast; his body was covered with what can be called nothing but a bundled patchwork of rags, of different colours, rudely stitched together, and often laid, piece after piece, over each other; and this covering descended to his knees, and was girt round his waist with a hay-rope, denominated in Ireland "suggaun;" a small-clothes of similar construction peeped from beneath it; his legs and feet were bare. Under his left arm he tucked a little bundle of twigs, dried potato-stalks, and a few straws, securely tied up with another "suggaun," which, again, the Irish peasant would call his "*bresna*," or day's gathering for the evening's fire; with the hand of the same arm he held, over his shoulder, the neck of a wallet, which hung, half filled, at his back, and with the other grasped a long, knotty, polished walking-staff. Thus, at a first view, the poor man might only present an appearance of mendicant misery and squalidness, and attract no particular notice distinct from the various other sets of vagrant beggars, who, before and behind him, shuffled along towards the rendezvous of good living for the day—namely, Mickle Tobin's house; but if one looked a second time at him, or observantly contrasted him with his seeming brethren, some peculiar character was visible. Although his eye dwelt immovably on the ground; although long past his prime of bodily strength; and, as has been noticed, although laden with the wallet, he walked perfectly upright—not even his head or neck following the downcast and fixed habit of his glance; his brow was commanding, though self-abased and humbled; his nose, the only feature to be seen, of fine large mould; his bare legs, though tanned by weather, and showing some of the stringy sinuosity of approaching age, were beautifully and even delicately shaped; and his long, firm, measured tread—during which the feet turned outward in that pleasing evenness symmetry confers, and that the dancing-master would fain ensure to every pupil—conveyed a notion of native and early loftiness of nature, of which the physical impression could not yet be lost, even amid accumulated misery and humiliation.

"Ah, poor *Padhre na-Moulh*, father," said Ellen, as he passed them, walking, as nearly as their horses would permit, in the middle of the bridge; "and is he, too, going to be the better of a day of feasting?"

"Peter, how do you do to-day?" asked Mr. Pratt. No

verbal answer was expected, because it was known that, whether from a natural want, or a wayward, insane, or, perhaps, religious cause, Peter never uttered a word, although he gave clear proof of hearing and understanding whatever was spoken of him; no reply was, we say, expected from his lips, but Mr. Pratt paused, as he had often vainly done before, in hopes that the poor object would show, by some sign or action, a return to his greeting.

"The unfortunate man has not heard you, sir," said Ellen, when no notice of the salute came from the mendicant. "How are you, Padhre?" she proceeded, willing to relieve her father (for she knew him well) of the little disappointment she thought he would feel at having his condescension go for nothing: and the moment her voice sounded in his ear, Peter stopped; drew up to let them pass; while they did so, bowed his head to his breast, two or three times, in a lowly, respectful manner, and then kneeling in the rough and miry road, moved his lips, his eyes still down, as if in a prayer for the young lady. This result did not, however, gratify Mr. Pratt: for he felt that, as Peter was nearer to them when he spoke, than when his daughter repeated his question, the man might have answered, had he wished, in the first instance.

"Musha, Padhre, will the penance never go away?" asked the leader of a band of beggars, who, while he knelt, quickly shambled by him.

"Or the speech never come back to you, Padhre, aroon?" queried another, in a tone half pitiful, half ironical. He took no notice, either in anger or observation, of these questions.

"Bags, bags! hallo, bags!" shouted a string of village urchins, as they scampered over the bridge, applying to him a nick-name derived from his often carrying more than one wallet in his wandering excursions. Still he took no notice, not even by raising his eyes or knitting his brows, or as much as stopping the movement of his lips.

"Go home to th' ould castle, or it 'll be fallin' on all the good goold an' silver you do be always hiding in it!" cried one of the imps, recollecting a popular rumour, one of many connected with him, that endowed poor Peter with a miserly appropriation of the results of his habits of receiving, rather than of asking, alms from the charitable.

"Go home to it, an' mend the brogues for the fairies!" cried a second, embodying in this exhortation another piece of village gossip; to the effect, that any one who had courage enough (and few, at least among the present bold speakers, had) to peep, in evening twilight, about the precincts of the old ruin, in which he had chosen to take up his residence, might see sundry pairs of dilapidated brogues and shoes, laid cunningly among the weeds and rubbish, to be taken in by Peter overnight, and returned, at his hands, well pieced and patched, before the dew left the grass in the morning.

Still he remained abstracted. At last, "Halloo, hiss! tear him, Bully!—tear him, Barker!"—"cut the strings iv his bag, an' let the day's getherin o' money out!" screamed many of the idle boys, as they accompanied their cruel commands to their various dogs, with showers of mud on the passive creature; indeed, it was their custom, when they caught Peter free, in the open daylight, from the mystery and seclusion of his rather dreaded old castle, thus to revenge themselves on him for the terror and provoking discussion his name always excited at a distance.

And at last, the apathetic or humble man, showed some sense of the indignities cast upon him. He showed it, however, but slightly. While the mire descended on his bare head and ragged person, and while the barking and snarling curs ran on, half afraid, though, like their masters, to worry him, his calm brow, and worn, sallow cheek reddened for a moment, his eye, still hidden by its lid, shot askance at the mean and vicious animals, and his sinewy hand grasped its long staff more firmly; but the next instant, and before one of the bystanders interposed to protect him, the muscles of the hand relaxed; the brow and cheek faded back to their deep-pale hue; the eye again dropped on the ground, and, while nothing but a rolling tear gave evidence of the abiding smart of human feelings, he bowed his head upon his breast, more lowly than when he had seemed to salute the young lady, and as if in abject submission to all the suffering he might be doomed to endure.

It was Mr. Pratt, who, at the instance of his shocked and much affected daughter, stepped in between Peter and the crowd of persecuting brats and curs. With loud threats, and one or two cuts of his horsewhip, the whole pack, human and canine, were forced to desist, and run shrieking and hallooing

over the bridge, still keeping up their inveterate though baffled humour, and sure of escaping at a distance the rough treatment promised to them on the spot. But they had not gained the end of the bridge, when their anticipations of getting off with impunity met a sudden check. A large dog, of the Newfoundland species, who, it would seem, had, from some point of the high road leading to the bridge, become aware of their proceedings, swept in amongst them, and disregarding his own currish brethren, got down the boys by twos and threes, worrying them and shaking them, with his mouth placed on their breasts, and jumping—while their cries of terror now rose shrill—from one to another, according as the brat he had just been punishing, and had left for a second and third, began to betray any symptoms of a wish to get up and run away. It was well for them the indignant and noble animal lacked, from extreme old age, teeth and tusks to eke out his willing mind to chastise them on this occasion, as, perhaps, his highly roused spirit might have led him to more violence than his contempt warranted. He was, indeed, for a dog, evidently very old, as the thinness of his shaggy coat intimated, and even as the result of his vehement exertions confirmed; for Mr. Pratt observed that the sudden fury which had given him an unusual vigour soon exhausted itself; he began to stagger and pant, often falling by the side of his foe in a vain effort to renew his attack; and, at last, as one by one the young ragamuffins escaped, he had barely strength enough left to run, at a crippled pace, towards the spot where Padhre-na-Moulh now stood, and dropping at his feet, with low and complaining, and it might appear, sympathizing cries, acknowledge his decrepitude to his master.

And now the terrified youngsters were making the best of their way clear off the bridge, when it seemed that Retribution had not yet emptied her phials upon them. At the narrowest part, where the bridge clumsily joined the road, their leaders suddenly stopped; fell back, throwing their rear into confusion; and, one after the other, yelled out—"Here's Daddy Clayton! Daddy Clayton! an' *Thomaus Foddhah** by the side iv him!" "Here's Daddy Clayton, wid his crooked paw, an' Thomaus wid his long wattle! Padhre-na-Moulh's fairy men, that follys him everywhere he goes, an'

* Long Tom.

stops wid him all night, to watch him for the good people! They'll kill us stone dead for meddlin' or makin' wid him! they'll spile us, an' they'll rune us, so they will—oha! oha! oha!"

Mr. Pratt, looking down the bridge, saw the two old men spoken of. One was very much bent and withered; the other, besides answering to his epithet in great height of stature, was emaciated almost to a skeleton in appearance; and both were clad in mendicant apparel, and loaded with mendicant wallets, great and small. Taking possession, one at either side, of the only outlet through which the boys could escape to the road, Daddy Clayton, the crippled little man, assuming, in his pinched and shrivelled features, an expression of unearthly spite and venom, and holding as high as he could the left arm, truly alluded to by the urchins as crooked, and, still higher, his good right arm, of which the hand held a curved stick, thus preparing himself, he stepped cautiously and ominously towards them in one direction, while, from the other, Thomaus brandished aloft, in both hands, the formidable weapon that had also made part of their anticipations. As the first-mentioned personage continued to steal on, something in the manner of a starved and prudent cat on a fine herd of young mice, the despairing boys, chiefly frightened by the hobgoblin motion he contrived to give his withered member, screamed aloud in agony, and ran towards the other side; but there encountering Thomaus and his wattle, their cries rose louder and louder: they shed tears; they fell on their knees, or they danced on their heels in a frenzy of terror; and it was not until Peter's faithful followers had supposed them sufficiently punished in apprehension, that they finally ceased the threats they had perhaps never meant to carry into effect, and permitted the unfeeling young offenders to make a retreat to the road.

Mr. Pratt and Ellen knew these old men also; and, after waiting to enjoy the panic they had inflicted on the village rout, turned to meet them. Before leaving Peter alone, where he stood, Ellen dropped a piece of money by his side, which the poor wretch drew nearer to him with the end of his staff, and then inclining his head towards the two old men, as if to fix their notice on it, began to walk, closely followed by his limping dog, and in his usual measured pace, to the village.

Daddy Clayton, keenly observing, with his little ferret-eyes, the whole proceeding, hobbled past Mr. Pratt and his daughter to pick up the silver piece, as if in the discharge of a usual duty; and his companion, standing still, addressed Ellen.

"The thousand blessin's on your open hand, and on your open heart, an' may they never fail you."

"Is he quieter in his mind lately, Thomaus?" inquired Miss Pratt.

"We b'lieve its asier the mind is wid him, a colleen; bud as dark as ever; an' waker, maybe: an' the heart growin' sicker an' heavier."

"Does he object as much as formerly to your following him, and taking care of him?" asked Mr. Pratt.

"Nien, sir:—iv an odd time, maybe, the staggers 'ill take him, an' then he 'll put the roars out iv his mouth that 'ud frighten any Christhen to hear, at the dead o' night, all manin' for us to lave him alone in his ould nook, tho' he never says the word: bud when we spake to him, and rason wid him, an' call to his mind that we're put upon his thrack to watch him, an' help him, an' hendher him from throwin' himsef wid the river, agin, all by the ordhers o' them he knows well, an' is behoulden to obey, the poor sowl comes round in the turn iv a hand, an' kneels down a start, and gets up as quite as the child."

"And who has set you both to watch him, Thomaus?" continued Mr. Pratt.

"Anan?" queried Thomaus, evidently with a view, in his own way, to evade the subject.

"'Tis no use to ask, sir," said Ellen, aside to her father; "I have, myself, often before put the question, accompanying it, too, with a good bribe for confidence; but the old men keep their secret close."

"Then they invent a story to give themselves a seeming right to follow the passive wretch for the charities he receives, or for the purpose of surrounding him and themselves with one of the superstitious mysteries by which they always practise on the credulity and on the purse of the vulgar," said Mr. Pratt.

"It may be so, sir; but I do not believe it is. So then, Thomaus, he now permits you to follow him, for the night, into the old building?"

"We folly him where we likes, the night an' the day, over the roads, an' the borheens, an' the fields, an' the hills, colleen," answered Daddy Clayton, hobbling back, after securing the largess, and speaking in a "cranky," dictatorial tone; "an' never ax lave from him, or any one for him; an' if he sits out on the stone, a-top o' the hill, we sit at his back the dark night long; or if he walks up an' down in the moonshine by the river's side, we walk in his thrack; an' all to do the biddin' o' them that must have their biddin' done; an' no thanks to any other body for doin' iv id, or for axin' why we do it, more-betoken."

"Well, Daddy, no one is asking you now, to put you in such bad humour," resumed Ellen, with a smile; "it will be enough for us to know that he is safe, and in want of nothing."

"Safe an' sound he is, an' safe an' sound 'ill be, an' no fear iv him doin' the harum on himself, sence the winther's night we started upon him at the wather's side, when he didn't think we war so near him; an' pult him, like the knot o' black weeds, out o' the sthrame; for them that's kep for other things don't get the lave to hang, or dhrown, or burn, at their own biddin' till the time is in it to be called to another place; an' nothin' is he in want iv, becase the Christhens won't let him; an', I tell ye agin', becase there 's others to keep him an' us, if the good Christhens never opened a hand to us on our road, the long year round."

"Come, my love," whispered Mr. Pratt, "let us leave these rude and silly beggars:" and he silently turned his horse once more towards the village.

"Good day, Thomaus; good day, Daddy," said Ellen, as she joined her father.

"A good day to *you*," answered the person last addressed, in a shrill, emphatic tone; then sinking his voice, and turning to his companion, "the good day, an' the merry one, is the laste we can wish you, when it 's to be the short one; an' for him that 's by your side, a curse on the day he cum among us, an' every day he stops wid us to the last:—an' that day 'ill be black enough to him, widout our sweet blessin'."

"It's a thruth it will, Daddy," responded Thomaus, as both sat down in a broken niche on the bridge, and there, propping themselves on their sticks, began a close "*shanachus*." It was a clear, fair day, though one in February; the sky

was blue and white; the river beneath them ran sparkling and transparent; its banks were green and fresh; at their backs, in the distance, rose high grounds, green and cheery too, with, towering above them, remote peaks of azure hills; birds twittered by; the little hum of happy or bustling life echoed from the near village; every thing and every creature, they excepted, seemed part of one whole being, joyous in a first escape from winter into coming spring. But they sat in the shattered niche, withered, discontented, and frozen into a state of body and mind that shewed no promise of returning vigour or joy; disconnected with the life and freshness about them; alone, but for their own fellowship, amid men and nature; existing only to await the hourly-expected call of death; and suggesting, from the unearthly expression of their features, from their discourse and their sentiments, either that—(in recollection of the village gossip)—they had been sent hither as the agents to a fearful purpose, or that, disgusted with a being they could no longer enjoy, and hating those they must leave to enjoy it, their tongues might only descant on the fatal haps which "flesh is heir to," and, not gratified by summing up even those, give vent to their mixed venom and credulity by weaving the omens of superstition around the mischances of life.

"It's a thruth you're sayin', Daddy," continued Thomaus; "a curse is on every day he's to see; but don't tell us the colleen's day is to be a short one."

"She hasn't my ill-will or my bad word, Thomaus, for her open hand an' her willin' speech to the ould an' the needy; bud we must say our sayin' out, lad, for all that."

"Did you get the warnin' for her, Daddy?"

"She has id on her, for herself, Thomaus, as plain as the moon does have the warnin' on her, wid the *brouch** round her or not round her, for the rain, or the frost, or the storum; she has id on the cheek, white an' sinkin'-in, afore its time; an' in the eye, withered an' dhroopin', when it's behowldin' to be laughin' and lookin' round for its pleasure; an' on the lips, as blue an' as faded as if the grave spiled 'em aforehand: or if she hadn't id on her, Thomaus, why, yes, I seen id for her; I seen id the bright night that Padhre walked us among the lone hills, when you couldn't see id, an' he couldn't see id, but

* Mist.

I could an' did ; by the side o' the long white stone, on the spread o' green grass in the wide glin, I saw id standin' ; an' in the red fire, while I was lookin' at id in the dead o' the night, I saw id ; an' in the moanin' that went round her father's house the last night I passed it close, I hard it. She's a *lauchy* colleen, Thomaus ; an' not one of 'em that goes in their brave clothes, an' rouls in their carriages, an' sets up for the ladies an' the queens o' the earth, more desarvin' iv a long life to take their pleasure in, an' show their pride in, an' laugh at the thought iv bein' young, an' rich, an' comely ; she's all this, Thomaus, an' more than this, that could be reckoned up, bud she must hear an' heed the call, Thomaus ; ay, while many an' ould, an' withered, an' despised thing stops behind her, Thomaus"—the speaker grinned a malicious smile, as, resting his chin upon the hand that was propped by his stick, his little red eyes fastened on those of his companion—"an' many a crature that could be her father's father crawls the earth she lies in, *Ailleen-bawn** must hear an' heed id, lad."

"Ochown, ochown, Daddy ; the sod lie light on her, then ; bud it'll be a lesson to 'em all. An' so Padhre 'ill never have his way an' his wish to make her an' the gorçoon come together ? an' young *Redmond-dhuivt* must go a wivin to another, bud not a betther."

"Ay, ay, gossip ; Padhre 'ill be crossed in that wish, an' the proud gorçoon 'ill live to look down upon her fresh sod, an' dhrop the tears, the scaldin' tears on id, that I don't begrudge him, if he loves an' likes her as Padhre thinks he does, or wants him to do ; he'll live for this, Thomaus, if his own warnin' does not come aforehand ; an' I'm lookin' for id to come, lad, an' the best prayers I say is put up that I may see it soon."

"An' that you may, Daddy : an' there's as good as two amins to your prayer ; he had ever an' always the dark look, an' the distant word, an' the close hand, for us an' our sort."

"An' no later nor the night he cum among us, in Padhre's house, to discoorse him, afther the sassenach upstart gave him the could side o' the dour, did you mind, Thomaus, the way he spoke to you an' me, an' looked on us, an' stamped at us, for crossin' him on Padhre's thrashold, as if we war the dirt

* Fair Ellen. † Black Redmond.

o' the ground he walked on, an' he the king o' the earth, far an' near? But come, Thomaus; it's time for us to be goin' to look afther the crature that wants an eye upon him; an' the weddin' faste is waitin' for us, lad; an' the comely bride waitin' for our blessin'; an' their music, an' their dancin,' an' their carousin' can't go on wid a heart, unless we're by to be the betther iv id, *morya*."*

As he spoke these words in a bitter jeer, the old cripple hobbled with his comrade towards the village.

Meantime Mr. Pratt and his daughter rode after Peter into the same village. In the middle of the street, where markets were holden, was a rude and shattered stone cross, mounted upon a broad base, and overhung by a large lime-tree. As they came on, Peter again appeared, sitting upon the base of the cross, as if resting himself, or perhaps patiently awaiting the arrival of his old warders, his dog couched at his feet, a crowd of curious or commiserating people standing around, and in an outer circle, a second array of village brats, cautiously, out of respect to the dog, applying to him the popular nick-name already mentioned, and well disposed to annoy him, as far as they dared, in other respects. The father and daughter felt anxious to protect him from further insult.

"Get up, good Peter," said Mr. Pratt, addressing him in a kind tone as they passed. He did not move.

"Do, Padhre, get up, for God's sake, and come with us to the wedding," echoed Ellen.

He bowed his head, but did not rise.

"Stand up, my son," exhorted the aged but mild voice of a third speaker from behind; and Ellen and her father were joined by Mr. Fenelly, the parish priest, and by his young and healthy-looking coadjutor, both mounted, and also on their way to Mickle Tobin's. Between these gentlemen and Mr. Pratt and his daughter the greetings of acquaintances ensued; while, at the first sound of the old priest's voice, Peter started, and letting his hand slide downward along his staff, knelt and moved his lips.

"Rise, my son, rise, and put a trust in Him who will soon bring you the peace of mind, and the blessing at last," continued the old clergyman: and after giving two or three very lowly obeisances, the wretched man stood up, and took his way against the hilly road that led out of the village.

* This implies a sneer.

"Poor fellow!" said Mr. Pratt, speaking to Mr. Fenelly; "whatever may be the cause of it, his present misery seems great and abject: Ellen and I, sir, were making conjectures about it, before you came up; and perhaps your experience could assist us in them."

"His troubles, and, if any, his crimes, Mr. Pratt," continued the priest, coldly, "are, we must suppose, solely between his God and him; but do you take our road, my dear Miss Nelly?—are you for a bit of the bridecake?—come, then,"—having received a languid smile of assent—"let an old man play the cavalier at your bridle;" and without further observation on the subject thus rather peremptorily waived, the party rode in Peter's track against the hill.

CHAPTER V.

On account of the steepness and ruggedness of the ascent, the whole party walked their horses very slowly until they gained level ground, from which a wide view of the adjacent country was commanded—of the river and the river's banks above and below the bridge, of the undulating lands at the far side of the clear inland stream, and of other more majestic grounds lying farther on than their present place of destination, but in a continuation of the same route. Below, at the backs of swelling inequalities, that hid a view of them from the bridge, appeared a scattered group of monastic ruins, in one of which Peter had taken up his residence, and from which he derived his title of Peter-na-Moulh, or Peter of the Castle. These relics of a time, a community, and institutions gone by, were about half a dozen in number; some, the remains of arched cloisters; some, square castles, much bedded in their own accumulated fragments, and in the soil, weeds, and other vegetation, that ages had deposited and matured around them; and some showing shapes so curious and peculiar, as to give rise to various surmises touching their purpose on the part of all superficial visitors, and to considerable doubts on the part of more antiquarian and learned observers. Village guides would point out such and such a little edifice, internally canopied by ivy that had

rioted up its sides, as, at a former time, appropriated to uses, which, without a violent anachronism, the hearer could not force himself to believe were then contemplated; and the general, and, we believe, even select notion was, that, many centuries ago, here had flourished an important town, grown up under monastic patronage, of which the greater portion was now crumbled off the face of the earth, and of which the very name was forgotten.

Mr. Pratt, his daughter, and the two clergymen drew up on the top of the ascent that offered the varied prospect we have sketched, and stopped some time to look around them. Meanwhile Peter, whom they had not overtaken since he left the village before them, was seen turning up the little bridle-road, that, at the right, some hundred yards distant, led directly to the festive house; and his two old guardians came close to the party, ere they, too, followed in his steps.

At last they gained the yard before the small farmer's door; and the first thing that challenged notice was dark groups of beggars, strewed all around, men and women, old and young; some sitting, or loungingly reclining on the ground; some standing; but all laughing, or gabbling loudly, or smoking; while a few sang out, at the top of their lungs, the most festive, congratulatory, or ecstatic songs. These people seemed, in fact, quite at home—quite at their ease; their stations taken up altogether as matter of right, and themselves deposited here as part of the wedding furniture. Their bearing showed a conclusion that there was abundance of food in preparation; enough "an' lavins" for them all. Not less than fifty could have been assembled; and, perhaps, confident of their numbers, their state of easy expectation of good treatment might be intended and received as a compliment to the substance and consideration of the house.

Standing alone, in a remote corner, his back resting against the low wall that surrounded the yard, his person and head drawn up, and his eyes bent on the ground as usual, appeared Padhre-na-Moulh. Beer had been distributed among the mendicants; and one or two came to him, in a way half-brotherly, half sneering, to offer a draught. He shook his head in token of refusal. Another, producing his own travelling horn, invited him to taste "a dhrop o' the mouth-wather," meaning whiskey. This kindness he also declined in a similar way. His old friends now entered the yard, and

walking to the pump, procured a bowl of water, and brought it to him. Of the primitive beverage he drank sparingly; then pacing towards the middle of the yard, stooped and gathered up a few uncooked potatoes, dropt there accidentally, put them into his wallet, and finally strode beyond the precincts of the house of feasting, and sat down in a near field, as if to await the attendance of Thomaus and Daddy Clayton, who could not so soon be expected to give up the chances of the day. Ellen thought she might read, in his present proceedings, the conduct of a man upon whom the trade of begging the morsel that supported him was necessitously imposed, who came, therefore, upon a kind of professional day, to a chief mart for his business; but who, having discharged his obligation by picking up the few potatoes, turned from a scene of human happiness in which he either would not or durst not participate. While she regarded him, and, indeed, while all her party paused a moment to take in the scene around, Mr. Fenelly beckoned the two old men, Peter's companions, whispered them when they came to his stirrup, and they were immediately observed with looks of mortification and ill-humour, to join the poor solitary in the outer field, cause him to arise, and follow in his footsteps across the road, and then down a zig-zag path, that, owing to the high situation of Tobin's house, was seen to wind over successive eminences to the ruins by the river's side.

The party alighted, gave their horses to a crowd of zealous grooms in attendance, and stepped to the house. At the open door they were received by the vanithee, dressed in her richest clothes, with a face of great business and importance, and yet with a commanding self-possession, as if all the bustle around her was no unusual thing, and as if no one should have to say that it had put her out of countenance or equilibrium. She seemed to feel strongly, nay, awfully, the responsibility of her situation, but to experience at the same time a full consciousness of supporting it without difficulty. At her back appeared her "honest man o' the house," attended by four or five strapping sons, from all of whom the visitors had to undergo (after respectful obeisances) many hearty shakes of the hand, thanks, deep and lively, for the honour done to the poor cabin, and *cead-mille-phalteagh*, over and over again. Then, preceded by the dame, and surrounded by the men as a guard of honour, they were allowed to march along.

The first apartment traversed was, of course, the kitchen ; and here were such immense fires, such roasting and broiling, and boiling, and such a fuss among a crowd of women, half composed of the real domestics of the house, half of all the bride's elderly friends and relations, come far and near to assist in the preparation of her wedding feast ; and such an oppressive heat, and such loud talking among them, as they gave twenty different orders about dressing the viands ; and such a steam, and such a fume, that, after a look or two, quite sufficient to prove they need not be hungry for the evening, the guests, still following the vanithee, and enclosed by their body guard, were glad to pass into an inner room.

This was a bed-chamber, containing a curtained bed, "dacent to look at," and a rude chest of drawers at the other side. A flank of damsels were sitting on the edge of the bed, who, as soon as the visitors entered, and that they had stood up to drop their "curtshies," seemed to stand on the defensive ; glance prepared for glance, and a smart word for every question. They were dressed in white, or, as nearly in white as circumstances would allow ; and had on close-fitting caps, with great bunches of white ribbon at one side. It need not further be declared that they were the friends and handmaids of the bride-elect, who, in the back-ground, sitting sideways, on the other edge of the bed, and pretending to be undistinguished among the throng, hung back, in appropriate timidity, until she was formally, and not without some native graces of action and manner on her part, introduced by her father to the important strangers.

As the bustle of presentation was just subsiding, the vanithee, putting her face to the little window of the chamber, while the clink of horses' hoofs echoed in the yard, accompanied by a congratulatory hum among the swarm of beggars, gave a cry of great interest and pleasure, and adding, "Miss Rosy, Miss Rosy ! your thousand pardons, genteels ; come, gorçoons, come," hurried out, attended by her husband and sons. Mr. Pratt, also looking into the yard, saw, descending from a beautiful long-tailed little palfrey, the young lady about whom he latently felt so much curiosity. A grave-looking servant, that had ridden with her to the house, came respectfully to proffer his assistance as she quitted her saddle ; but waving her hand towards an elderly female whom he had left sitting in a pillion upon his own horse, Miss Rosalie D'Arnell

bounded lightly, gracefully, and with the energy of youthful spirit to the ground.

A moment after, the hand of her old companion drawn under her arm, and preceded by the dame of the house, and, as the first party had been treated, surrounded by the male guard of honour, the young lady entered the little chamber. Mr. Pratt inwardly acknowledged, with a mixture of surprise, admiration, and discontent, the superior attractions Miss D'Arnell at a first view presented. She was tall, roundly, but elegantly formed; her complexion almost brown, yet glowing with subdued colour; her hair and eyes black, and altogether something of a foreign character stamped on her features. Her air was lofty, but not of the kind of loftiness he had been led to anticipate, for blandness and smiles tempered it to fascination. She wore a riding habit of green cloth, of which the flowing skirts were tucked up and thrown over her right arm; and, instead of the man's hat generally affected, with a very bad grace, by our fair young equestrians, a Spanish-shaped one, of black silk, looped up in front, and half hid in a clustering plume of black ostrich feathers. In face, gait, expression, and costume, her elderly associate seemed decidedly a foreigner.

When, with a rapid step, Miss D'Arnell entered the little apartment, Ellen was sitting beside the bride, holding the hand she had just shaken, and in the act of pronouncing a name, in consequence of Kitty Tobin's inquiries, that brought tears to her eyes, and made her heart pant in her bosom. The young ladies exchanged glances, as the new guest, observing Ellen, stopped a moment at the threshhold; mutual blushes, perhaps the result of a common thought, crimsoned their cheeks; and a shade of embarrassment began to steal over the circle, when Miss D'Arnell rallied, advanced smiling to the bride, took her hands, made her some pretty compliments, in pure English, but with a few peculiarities of accent: then turned gracefully, freely, yet, perhaps, condescendingly, to Ellen, saluted her also; then to the old priest; and, while Mr. Pratt's courtierly bow received but a slight and queen-like notice, seemed to lavish upon him the greetings of a close and kndly intimacy.

A renewed embarrassment might have ensued, were it not soon understood that the introduction of the guests into this apartment, was merely for the purpose of allowing them to

disencumber themselves of their outward dress, here officiously to be laid up till the hour of departure. As Miss D'Arnell, Ellen, Mr. Pratt, and the priest, accordingly proceeded to doff their habits, hats, and great coats, one of the bride's brothers, the best looking of the guard of honour, addressed the former mentioned lady, with a well-managed waggery of face, voice, and manner,peculiarly Irish. "Tundher-an'-ouns, Miss!—we ax pardon"—pretending to be shocked at his own abruptness, "but, what's the rason, wid your ladyship's lave, you come with the boots on?" as his eye glanced dolefully at her feet; "by the powers o' man, Miss, you'll want the use o' the legs to-night, an' sure it's kilt you'll be with them boults on you, God bless you."

Laughing, in a kind of tolerating good-humour, while her old *bonne* muttered "*fi donc*," and stepped close to her side, Miss D'Arnell called to her servant, and soon satisfied her guardsman that she had foreseen she should "want the use of her feet;" the man producing a pair of dancing slippers, which she explained were to replace her boots at the proper time. This attention to circumstances on the part of the greatest guest, and the bountiful wish it showed to come prepared for the sports of the night, did not fail to command a loud murmur of delight from every creature present, and Mr. Pratt felt uncomfortable at seeing his drooping daughter, fully beloved as she was, only second in consideration and interest, where he had reckoned on seeing her predominate, particularly as the only child of the bridegroom's landlord.

"Musha, the light of our eyes you war, Miss Rosy," resumed the lad who had provoked the scene, "an' them is the darlins o' dancin'-pumps, sure enough," taking them from the servant; "by Gar, the sight o' them 'ud make one dance without the piper, if they'd only go on a body," laying one of them along the sole of his own large shoe; "well, God be praised! the likes of sich a little foot as them does for, we never hard of afore."

Again, laughing, and, perhaps, blushing in a degree, at the subdued Irish flattery thus paid her, on a point about which, we have been told, all ladies are anxious, Miss D'Arnell inattentive to the surprise expressed in the glances, whispers, and fidgets of her old companion led the way, handed out by Mr. Fenelly, from the chamber; Ellen, Mr. Pratt, and the young priest following.

"She must have heard the report of Redmond's present situation," thought Mr. Pratt, as all got into motion; "but it troubles her not; she does not, cannot love him."

The ladies and gentlemen, attended as before, were again ushered through the heat, gabble, and odours of the kitchen into another room at its opposite side. It was a neat earthen-floored, white-washed apartment, of moderate size, hung round with those large rude wood prints of scripture subjects (having explanatory rhymes at the bottom), that are to be purchased for about one penny each at Irish fairs and markets; particularly remarkable for the hideous faces and forms they display as likenesses of holy persons; and which may be truly designated as frightful, if not impious caricatures of saints, angels, and higher beings.

Here the visitors found a large assemblage of young and old; the young folk predominating, however. A piper, seated near the hearth, on a three-legged stool, was blowing away, with might and main, while two sets of two couples each, danced—as well as they could manage it in the limited space prescribed—the old reel of four. This was premature, it may be remarked: before the marriage-feast, nay, even before the marriage itself. Yes; but, time to spare, and a piper at hand, such a group of "boys and girls" might keep quiet in Holland, England, or even perhaps in Scotland; not in Ireland. Around, by the walls, the lookers-on sat or stood, all, of every age and sex, in their holiday garbs; best wigs, best caps, best coats; and every face looking a blithe anticipation of the long night of mirth and fun that was surely to follow.

The entrance of the important guests gave no interruption to the dancers, if we except the curtsies adroitly dropt by the female *figurantes*, in the evolutions of the figure of the reel, and one or two ecstatic shouts and capers of recognition vouchsafed by their partners. But among the old folk, and the young people waiting for their turn "on the floor," much anxious and smiling bustle took place, which, perhaps, had ended in some confusion, but that, a few minutes after the party entered, all were summoned to the nuptial feast.

Instantly the piper stopped; the dancers became fixed in one position; and every countenance grew grave at the near approach of the time for behaving "dacent." Still heralded by the quiet, all-important vanithee, and enclosed by their body-

guard, the superior guests were a third time escorted through the now-subdued region of the kitchen, to a door which opened into the yard, where they met the bride, her favoured handmaid, and other friends; and then across part of the yard to the barn; which was, and, on all such occasions is, the banquet-hall in Ireland; and on other occasions, too, of a very different character, by any further allusion to which we will not damp the present time of mirth and feasting.

Around three sides of the walls of the spacious barn, tables, constructed for the evening, were ranged with—about that place called the head—chairs for the more considerable guests, and, at either side of the remainder of the board, forms for all comers. Inside, at the walls, there was barely room for the people to sit down; as much as possible of the area of the barn being kept free for dancing.

Before the chair which the priest was to occupy, appeared a huge mass of "corned beef," bolstered by a bed of greens, carrots, and parsnips, and reeking with a fine steam, that rolled up in volumes to the wattled roof. To it succeeded, at either side, legs of mutton, boiled; shoulders of mutton, roasted; turkeys and "salary" sauce (no bad things); sides of bacon, roast geese, fowls, chickens, hams, legs of mutton, again; and shoulders and saddles again; and varieties of the feathered tribe, again and again all the tables round—until the eye became bewildered in tracing the abundant monotony. To the priest's hand were laid bottles of wine, and more awaited his call in a basket at the back of his chair. Cold punch, in great jugs, attended on the company lower down. Beer barrels, propped in the corners, yielded a dull, plethoric sound, declaratory of their well-filled condition, to whatever hasty heel knocked against them, in passing by.

Crowds of inferior guests poured in after our party, and places were taken, and the feast began. Mr. Fenelly, appalled by the mountain of beef he saw he had to cut through, requested his "coadjutor" to sit by him, one and the same with himself, as it were, to render such assistance, on the present practical occasion, as might indeed be worthy of his official title. Upon Mr. Fenelly's right sat the bride, according to etiquette; upon his left, or rather upon the left of his fellow-labourer, the bride's-maid; next to the bride, Miss D'Arnell; next to her, Ellen; next to her, the old foreign lady, looking very much amazed; then the vanithee; then the bride's friends;

and then the female friends, in general, of the family and occasion, all that side of the table ranged, according to rank and standing in the world, until they ended in the poor relations, followers, and even helpers and servants; each and every, be it remembered, of the same sex: for the division of sexes, at the two sides of the tables, was, though not a general practice, as remarkable as the similar divisions to be observed in a synagogue. Heading the opposite rank, appeared Mr. Pratt, the first, after the bridesmaid, upon the left of the priests; below him, the "man o' the house;" a row of "sthrong farmers" followed; that is, the richest of the class to which old Tobin belonged, with Darby Roach and his younger sons among them, afther them a more numerous string of farmers and farmers' sons of less degree; until as at the women's side, very humble folk, including pipers and fiddlers, closed the array. But to Mr. Pratt's surprise, Ristharde Roach, the hero of the evening, nowhere appeared. His landlord looked round for him in vain; he certainly was not to be seen.

Dinner, or supper, or whatever it may properly be called, went on. Legs and shoulders of mutton, geese, and turkeys, hams and fowls disappeared in a trice, as if they had never been. Mr. Pratt officiated at a goose, of which, when finally carved, the only piece left on the dish was that too well secured by his fork. But the most general attack was made upon the heap of beef at the head, which, we are forced to admit, we cannot describe by a technical name; it was too monstrous for a round merely; the roaring Bull of Bashan, supposing him vast and eatable as he was famous, could not supply such a one; and yet it looked round, too; and for aught we know, might be an entire animal, horns and hoofs excepted, coiled up into that form, like a collared eel. In truth and reality, it completely hid the two priests when they innocently attempted to sit down to their task; and it was only by standing erect to their full height, that the gentlemen, working together with two great carving knives and forks, while all the time their brows teemed in the downright labour of the office, could answer the incessant demands made upon them. For we repeat, no matter what other dish might be assailed, first or last, every creature in the barn would have a plate of beef from "his reverence." And amid all this hurry of supplying and consuming, great was the din of dishes and plates, knives and forks, glasses, jugs,

tumblers, and even wooden "noggins;" of mastication and swallowing hearty draughts, and smacking lips after them; of asking and assenting; of gabbling aside and across to each other, in quick jest and repartee, suggested by some feature or circumstance of the occasion; while, now and then, a young fellow, whose very heart was in the business, and whose veins swelled too high with present and anticipated pleasure, or some old queer-wigged sire, who unused to liquor during dinner, had hobnobbed too freely, owned the influence of the joyous uproar (or, perhaps, deemed it a warrant for the freedom) by emitting, in a short interval of eating or drinking, an expressive "whoo!"—which, echoing to the beggars in the yard, was caught up, and duly acknowledged. Still, to the increased surprise of Mr. Pratt, Ristharde, the reputed bridegroom, did not appear.

The only persons who behaved with any considerable degree of quietness during the meal, were the bride, her mother, and her five brothers. The young girl herself acted her part—we do not use the phrase in an invidious sense—well and evenly. She seemed serious, studiously mild in her returns to the various attentions paid her by the priests and her grand guests, as if she had reflected on the important character she was about to assume, and already prepared herself to wear it with due dignity; and we would say there was natural grace and natural politeness in her manner, although she was unacquainted with the formula of politeness; but, added to all this, there was a pensiveness about her, and even a tearful suffusion in her eyes, and an occasional tremor of her lip, which scarcely could be accounted for by the theory of maidenly fears and regrets. In fact, she was thinking, now and then, —but without any improper reference or association—of the present fate of her foster-brother, Redmond. Her mother's demureness of manner has already been noticed. Her brothers did not sit to the table, but walked about from guest to guest, ascertaining the wants or wishes of each, or suggesting gratifications of appetite; or superintending different removes, which rapidly occurred, such as the replacing a roast shoulder of mutton with a boiled leg of the same; or helping those of the servants, who were not, for the moment, enjoying themselves, to visit the beer barrels, or deposit jugs of punch on the table; and all this the young men went through with a gravity, a propriety,

and an ease of deportment, that reminded one of well-trained stewards at a more fashionable public dinner; and that certainly gave a pleasing notion of the sincere and simple earnestness of the old hospitality.

We must hasten to announce the end of the feast. All claimants had been silenced, the table cleared, a fresh supply of wine and punch placed on it, still no bridegroom was forthcoming: Mr. Fenelly stood up to pronounce a grace; it was over; every eye turned on the bride, or to the door; a silence only slightly broken by sly whispers and smothered titters ensued; footsteps sounded in the yard; an Amazonian wench entered with a cake, almost twice as great as a Cheshire cheese, and placed it at the soggarth's right hand. The two clergymen, with features in which solemnity and good-humour struggled hard, began to cut and delve it very mechanically. The bride looked down upon her lap, and the paleness that comes from a sense of a rapidly approaching crisis, spread over her cheeks. Other steps sounded near the door, and blushes, quick and bright, chased that paleness away. Two young men entered; and the subdued cheer of welcome, and the jest and jibe that instantly broke the silence, proclaimed the bridegroom and his bridesman. Their absence, until this moment, was all according to *bienseance*. In Ireland, upon the day of her marriage, a country bride is supposed to know nothing of what is going to happen: crowds of young women, and old ones too, are collected to hold her sacred from premature contact with her destined husband; he, like a great oaf, reverences the etiquette too, keeping far away under the *surveillance* of his "young man;" and just at the nick of time he happens to come in, as we see in the present instance, quite unconscious, as it were, and with his "God save all here," as his jeering friends call it. And the whole of this is "dacency" and "manners."

Mr. Pratt looked hard at Ristharde, scarce recognizing, in the tight-made, light-clad fellow that now appeared, the same person who, covered with the dirt of the fields, his knees burst through his small-clothes, and his top-coat hanging clumsily about him, had come with his father, Darby, to invite him to the nuptials. Ristharde's wedding suit consisted of a close-made buck-skin, white yarn stockings, and small-pointed pumps; a flaming yellow vest, properly chosen we would

say, being Hymen's colour, although Ristharde couldn't tell you who Hymen was if you asked him ; a blue coat, tolerably fine, and tolerably cut ; a richly figured silk cravat, a smooth chin, and a smartly cropped head. The only thing about him like his former self was his ostentatious sheepiness, as, stepping over the threshold of the barn, after his bridesman, and keeping one hand in his breeches pocket, and holding his head down, he pretended, at thirty years of age, to be ashamed and out of countenance before the company, and on account of what he was going to do. But a certain admixture of waggery ran through this affectation, which Mr. Pratt had not observed upon the day before alluded to, and which, to a skilful eye, fully redeemed " Masther Ristharde" from the charge of real poltroonery. In fact, his manner, and particularly his faint sly smile, seemed to say,—" Look at me, neighbours ; God help a poor boy like me ! musha, see how ashamed I am !"

By some simultaneous movement, fussy, but regular, and of which it might be difficult to explain the complex machinery, bride and bridegroom confronted each other, on the middle of the barn floor, a few seconds after Ristharde's entrance. The girl stood with her father at one side, her bridesmaid at the other, her mother and brothers at her back, and Miss D'Arnell, Ellen, and many humbler female friends around. Ristharde was also supported by his father, Darby, his " young man," Mr. Pratt, and several others. The rest of the company stood up in their places. The old priest put on a slight badge of his clerical character, opened his missal, and making the sign of the cross with his outstretched hand, approached the young couple. A profound silence at last prevailed.

The clergyman first demanded of the relations of both parties, if their full consent had been given to the nuptials. The old vanithee, and the two old fathers, rendered a hearty affirmative, while their voices were low and broken, however, and their own acknowledgment of thus abandoning all future parental authority, brought tears to their eyes. Kitty Tobin quickly caught the infection, and wept and sobbed outright ; and even Ristharde, to say nothing of the bridesmaid and the near connexions and friends, male and female, snuffled, and changed from one leg to the other, to keep up his courage. The next question proposed by the priest was directed to himself.

"Have you, Richard Roach, given your promise of marriage to any other woman?"

"Och, the devil's the one!—we ax God's pardon, your Reverence, an' your own ten thousand pardons"—(he had really been thrown off his guard, half indignant at the supposition)—"but never's the one, we mane, far and wide, from a child up."

The commencement of this answer had nearly disturbed the gravity of all around, but that, with a stern brow, Mr. Fenelly brought Ristharde to task for his most untimely tendency in an imprecation; and then the clergyman at once proceeded in his office. Before commencing the ceremony, he addressed himself to bride and bridegroom, upon the nature of the engagement into which they were about to enter; its divine ordination and the object of that ordination; the dispositions in which it ought to be embraced; and its future duties and responsibilities. To expect a blessing on their nuptials, he told them they were bound to appear before God and him in the state of grace—that is, free from mortal sin, and full of contrition and sorrow for the crimes and errors of their former life. He told them that their chief impulse in becoming man and wife ought to arise from a wish to obey a divine command. He warned them, that it was only by loving, cherishing and practising forbearance towards each other, they could hope to fulfil the common duties of their future stations, and at the same time, secure mutual happiness; and should God bless them in an offspring (Ristharde again shuffled on his legs, and some young girls smiled and bit their lips, and others hung down their heads), he enforced upon them, as their paramount duty, the bringing up such children in the love and fear of Him who gave them.

After this discourse, which was impressively delivered, the real business of the evening promptly went on. There was some unnecessary delay, towards the middle of the ceremony, on account of Ristharde's repeatedly mistaking the pocket in which he thought he had put up the ring; but, as all his pockets were very new, and "by coorse, very sthrange to him" (his own explanation), "it was no great wondher that he didn't know their ins-and-outs, pat, at the first going off." In a few minutes, however, the knot was tied fast enough; and then, to conclude the whole, the new husband and wife, their friends, and all in the barn, knelt down at the priest's

instance, to join him in a devout prayer for a blessing on the marriage.

The first movement of the old clergyman to rise, was the signal for a scene of extraordinary and uproarious vivacity. At a rustic wedding in Ireland, it is a great point of chuckling ambition, among the young fellows assembled, to try not only who shall snatch the first congratulatory kiss from the new-made wife, after her lord has saluted her, but, if possible, who shall be beforehand with his very self, in that pleasant ceremonial. Accordingly, even while the whole company knelt to join in the priest's last prayer, Mr. Pratt prepared for the coming event, noticed the anticipating glances of many a lad, turned sideways, towards the middle of the floor, and the anticipating movements too of disposing the limbs into good order for a couching spring; while Ristharde, on his part, returned the reconnoitring regards of his friends, and was seen to shuffle, very cautiously, on his knees, still closer to his bride. One light-limbed, short youth, who during dinner had been remarkable for the premature "screeches" that now and then rung through the barn, and who seemed a compound of the most restless animal spirits, particularly attracted Mr. Pratt's notice. Unlike the generality of his companions, who knelt on the ground, leaning over their form, he knelt on the form, leaning over the table, one leg slyly raised, and propping his body for a sudden effort, while his light blue eyes fixed, sparkling intensely and almost ferociously, on poor Kitty Tobin, or, as she must now be called, Roach; and scarcely had the old priest begun to rise, and the young couple to follow his example, when, like a shell out of a mortar, this fellow darted with a high and nimble vault across the table, scattering, as he described his parabola, glasses, jugs, and plenty of good liquor, and breaking through every rank, male and female, until, with a "hurroo! the first kiss for Jim Burne!" he landed at the bride's side, and clasped her in his arms. But Ristharde, to his credit, foiled the attack, vigorous and well-concerted as it was. In fact, he had especially feared the nimbleness and evident intentions of this very Jim Burne; so that, even while his young wife rose up, his own arm was round her neck, pressing her down; and just when the treacherous foe sprung upon her, he had only to use the superior strength of his disengaged hand, to keep back the mad fellow's head, until he ravished, himself, the initiating

favour which certainly was his due. Jim was therefore obliged to content himself with kissing the bride the first of all his companions, who scrambled, in groups, to enjoy the honour at second, third, and twentieth rate; and Kitty still had to undergo the farewell and weeping salutes of her parents, brothers, and young and old friends, before she could again sit at the nuptial board.

And now commenced the gathering-in of the good soggarth's crop. His harvest home indeed it was. The immense bride-cake had been cut into sturdy slices, and heaped on trays; these trays were seized on by the immediate relatives of the newly-married couple, and served out by them to the guests; not one, young or old, that was not supplied; a donation in every instance, be it large or small, laid down in exchange for the dainty. During the progress of the servitors, much mirth and pleasantry went forward. There was joking with the girls on its special virtue, and broad hints given as to the boys they were to dream of by its agency. The boys were told the names of the girls they would be likely to break bread with. Where liberal offerings were anticipated, pieces of cake of parallel magnitude were forced on the recipient; and occasional shouts of exultation mingled with the general merriment, when a munificent largess was placed on the bride-cake tray. Then the trays came back to the bank counter whence they had gone forth, the officers of the gathering stepping proudly; each tray denuded of its original freight, but returning laden with notes, and gold, and silver, as merchants' say, obtained in barter.

In truth, Father Fenelly should be endowed by the very earliest spirit of Christian self-denial; he must have been as regardless of purse and scrip as the very earliest Christians were, if he could look on with indifference as tray after tray, with, to him, an abundant harvest, was laid before him.

Then came the computation of Father Fenelly's stacks of corn. To the process of reckoning the contents of the trays, the Tobins and the Roaches kept a close eye. The amount was announced aloud to be thirty pounds, and the publication of this excessive sum met with a general cheer. The Tobins and the Roaches cheered, because it was thereby evident that the now conjoint families were of high station and consideration in their locality; and the contributors adopted the cheer of the Tobins and Roaches, because their own

generosity and neighbourly good-will were recorded in the most convincing manner.

Mike Tobin and his wife agreed on consultation that "too good usage" could not be other than the meet of the neighbours who had distinguished the marriage of "their little girl" so evidently.

Still, "by course of manners," Ristharde remained separated from his bride, though one would think he had at last earned the right of sitting closely by her side. She returned to her place at Mr. Fenelly's right hand; he was only allowed a *tête-à-tête* with her bridesmaid. The wedding-cake having completed its revolution, the symptoms of a new scene became visible. Two pipers, blind old fellows, sleek in face and person, though rather tattered in attire, shambled from among the humbler guests, at the end of the barn, and took their seats on two stools, in a corner. They were quickly followed by two little fiddlers, thin and half-starved (until that evening), but active and frisky as kittens, who also seated themselves, in virtue of their superior craft, before the pipers; and the orchestra thus assembled, a jarring noise of scraping, thrumming, squeaking and grunting, proclaimed that nuisance for which the most fashionable orchestras are celebrated,—namely, the prefatory tuning of their instruments.

No sooner had the discord begun than a serious consultation might be observed between the bridesman and the vanithee, which we are able to explain. In the absence of a guest of high degree it was the "young man's" privilege to dance the first dance with the bride. Now Mr. Pratt was a guest of distinction; but, query, whether he was not also too grave, or too stiff in his limbs, to get through the rapid movements of an Irish jig? And, indeed, a few nods and words from the gentleman soon decided that he thought he was, and up jumped the bridesman to make his scrape to Kitty Tobin.

She dropped her curtsey, of course, and gave her hand; but tears streamed from her eyes, as, in passing behind Ellen, she said, loud enough to be overheard by Miss D'Arnell and Mr. Pratt, too.—"Avoch, Miss, I thought it was another I'd dance the first step with, this night."

The hearers knew she alluded to Redmond. Ellen grew pale, and hung down her head; Miss D'Arnell blushed, and drooped her head also, and Mr. Pratt said, expressively,

"And I, too, Kitty; you cannot regret the disappointment more than I."

Additional embarrassment followed this reply, until Ristharde shyly came up to Miss D'Arnell, stopped before her, and performed his best bow. The young lady, recovering from her blush, with a gracious and radiant smile, rose up at his demand; the set for a reel was completed; the orchestra struck out, amid cries of joy and exultation, the dance began, and for some time nothing further was said, or seemed to be felt on the subject; no doubt, Mr. Pratt himself wished to proceed no farther in it, until Ellen should, in her turn, after Miss D'Arnell, be out of the way, dancing, as any discussion might contradict the account she had received of Redmond's absence.

When, however, the bride and Miss D'Arnell returned to their seats, and that Ellen, yielding to the pressing entreaties of her father, had answered the modest claim of one of Kitty's brothers, and proceeded with him to the middle of the floor, Mr. Pratt renewed the topic.

"Yes, Kitty, you cannot be more sorry for the unaccountable absence of your foster-brother than I am."

"Avoch, sir, an' that's sorry enough, if all they say be thrue," answered Kitty.

"Why, what do they say?" in apparent surprise.

"Unaccountable, sir?" repeated the old priest, distantly, and as if he had not heard the bride's reply, nor Mr. Pratt's question arising out of it, "the boy's absence is accounted for, at least"——

"Pray, let some one tell me how, sir; for *I* cannot account for it, and I shall most anxiously receive the information of others."

"Then *you* cannot surely have countenanced the report, sir?" continued the clergyman. Kitty and Miss D'Arnell looked up and fixed their eyes on Mr. Pratt.

"I do not precisely apprehend what you mean, Mr. Fenelly. Several idle persons have, indeed, afflicted me with statements that my young ward, since his departure from my house, has taken up with strange associates; how true or how false that story may be, I cannot tell; I can only hope it is utterly false; my sincere love for the boy, and, indeed, my knowledge of his character, feelings, and principles, compel me to discredit it; but——"

"The friends of both, Mr. Pratt," interrupted Miss D'Arnell, "of you and the young gentleman, must rejoice at that avowal."

"God bless him for it!" added Kitty.

"I do but my duty, and give way to my own sincere thoughts when I make it, madam," resumed Mr. Pratt, while the lady's vivacity created a secret sinking of his heart; "and so convinced am I that poor Redmond, getting impatient of control in his professional studies, has only taken a wild trip to Dublin or London, perhaps, that all my inquiries concerning him have, in total indifference to the rumour spoken of, been hitherto made in the hopes of finding him in one or other of those cities. But, as I was about to remark, the place of his absence, wherever it may be, would not give the cause of his absence; and yet that was the point, Mr. Fenelly, to which you alluded, I believe; and for which, if I understand you, you meant to say there was some certain report, too?"

"It was, sir."

"Then, sir, I have only to say that, apart from the probable cause I have before mentioned,—namely, Redmond's dislike of his studies, and his resenting the zealous efforts made to direct his mind to them, I am quite at a loss to account for his disappearance from my house."

"Thank God, then," said the old priest.

"Thank God," echoed Miss D'Arnell; Kitty uttered, joyously, a similar ejaculation.

"May I ask you what you mean, Mr. Fenelly?" inquired Mr. Pratt.

"Yes, sir; and I will tell you readily. Since you know nothing of any other cause, the horrible report that attributes another must be totally false; because, to have the least truth, it could have come only from you."

"Exactly. I do not even know the nature of the report."

"Then it is as well, perhaps, not to trouble you with it, Mr. Pratt."

"Except that as the guardian, as well of the reputation as of the person of Mr. Redmond," said Miss D'Arnell, "this gentleman ought to be made acquainted with everything which concerns him; particularly with a slander that tends to degrade the young man for ever."

"True, my dear," resumed Mr. Fenelly.

"True, indeed," resumed Mr. Pratt; "and therefore I

hope I may press my question, and again ask what the report is?"

"One that goes to make your ward disgraced and dishonoured in his parentage, sir," said the priest.

"Indeed!—" pausing, and then adding, in a tone of surprise and regret, and as if half-speaking to himself—"how, in the name of heaven, could that have gone out?"

"No matter, since it is so false, sir."

"And since the gentleman says it is," added Miss D'Arnell.

"Ah, then, the blessin's on his heart, I say again, for spakin' the word," sobbed Kitty—"I always said it was a black story."

"I never authorized it," resumed Mr. Pratt, sighing deeply, as he looked on the table. The priest and Miss D'Arnell exchanged glances.

"Then I have your authority, for the sake of our young friend, to contradict it, Mr. Pratt?"

"Sir?—why, yes—that is—in fact, Mr. Fenelly, this much I say: whatever may be the necessitous mystery attendant on my ward's parentage, I alone am, I believe, the sole person living in whose breast it is deposited,—and deposited, too, under seal of inviolable secrecy; so, sir, you can draw your own conclusions. You see I am not authority—am not accountable for the impertinent and inexplicable rumour; and—I beg your pardon—but as Miss Pratt now returns to us, we will, if you please, waive the subject;—there are reasons, Mr. Fenelly, why we should;—you perceive her delicate state of health; and on account of certain impressions studiously made by the certain person we spoke of, any hint on the matter might prove very injurious; in fact, sir, I must try to keep these reports, and this gossip, close from the poor child's ear."

Mr. Pratt spoke in a whisper, but in a whisper sufficiently loud to be overheard by Miss D'Arnell: and it was overheard by the young lady, and produced the effect the speaker intended. Her dark brow reddened and knit; her dark eye flashed; and, in a second after, the blood rushed back to her heart, and her heavings and pantings could scarce be restrained even by the strong spirit that strove to sway them. As Ellen came to sit by her side, she rose up haughtily, and was about to address her old com-

panion, as if with a command to retire, when, to the dismay of all around, Miss D'Arnell, fixing her eyes on a pane of glass at Mr. Pratt's back, that, during the day, admitted light into the barn, interrupted herself with a short shrill scream, and again sunk in her chair! and the surprise of the hearers had not a second's time to subside, when Ellen, also staring in the same direction, echoed her cry, and clung trembling to her rival.

"What is the matter, my love?" inquired Mr. Pratt, after having turned his eyes, with a hundred others (for the music and dancing instantly stopped), to the little window, and seen nothing.

"Redmond, sir,—it was Redmond, looking in upon us!" answered Ellen:—"Miss D'Arnell, was it not?"

"Absurdity, child," said her father.

"It was your ward, sir," observed Miss D'Arnell.

"His face, an' no other's," added Kitty, who, without any show of lively emotion, seemed absorbed in the little event; "Ristharde! Mick!" beckoning to her husband and one of her brothers—"let ye go out an' see if it wasn't."

"Do so, Ristharde," said Mr. Pratt, "and tell him that, everything forgotten and forgiven, I shall be made very happy by his presence."

The two young men withdrew. Little was said till they returned to inform the party that Redmond did not appear about the house. Miss D'Arnell made no remark. Ellen and the bride were not satisfied; and, at their joint entreaties, and the added request of Mr. Pratt, a fresh party set off to institute inquiries, and a search through the neighbourhood, and also to call, if necessary, at that gentleman's house, who now professed himself so interested, that he would only wait the arrival of Cotteril, and his men at arms, to look after the business himself. Meantime he urged that, on his, or his ward's account, the mirth of the evening might not be interrupted; Ellen seconded him; and the dance was blithely resumed by the humble guests; while Ristharde gave a new piece of information, on a different subject. Two men, he said, father and son, tenants of a gentleman in a distant parish (the father lately made his gamekeeper) waited abroad in the house, to see the soggarth and Mr. Pratt, on the head of a marriage about to be entered into.

Mr. Fenelly said he would not see them; he had nothing

to do with them; let them call on the priest of their own parish.

Ristharde explained, that the fair one who formed the chief subject of the business, lived in Mr. Fenelly's parish, and that, of course, the wedding must take place under Mr. Fenelly's jurisdiction. As to Mr. Pratt, there was a crabbed point of law, touching certain settlements offered by the young woman's father, which the strangers were most anxious to submit to his honour, and to no one else, far and near; and they had already called at "Square Pratt's" house, for that purpose.

Still Mr. Fenelly refused to see the claimants; the girl's father or brothers were the only proper persons to apply to; the present course was irregular; the hour was late, too; and two couples more were waiting for him in the village. If he was to speak to them at all, let them come in the morning to his own door.

"And what did his honour, Square Pratt, say?" continued Ristharde. "The two poor men looked up to his honour more than all the world besides, for settling of the bit o' law, for 'em; an' they thravelled far that day to spake a word to him; an' if Square Pratt wouldn't see 'em that night, they couldn't see him to-morrow, or any day afther, no more than his reverence; for they were behoulden to start for home that moment, an' be back agin, afore cock-crow."

"Yis, sir," said a stranger, who then entered, a decent-looking little elderly man, lightly-limbed, clad in a green frock, the emblem of the profession Ristharde had given him, and, wearing a small patch on his right eye—"yis, your honour, all's threw that the boy says; an' we hope your good honour 'll not be for sendin' us home without the law we cum so far to get; me an' my son Ned, sir, that's waiten in hopes, abroad in the house, your honour."

"Have deeds been drawn up, my good man?" asked Mr. Pratt, who felt flattered at the earnestness of the application from people so far out of his district.

"Yis, sir, if it's the parchments your honour manes, Ned has 'em in his pocket, sir."

"Then I will just step out to him, and not interrupt sport here," and Mr. Pratt rose.

"Do so, dear father," said Ellen, "it may do the poor people a service."

"God bless you, sir, an' many thanks; and God bless you, too, Miss, an' if we stood up against the whole world besides, never fear the hearty good-will of Ned an' myself, and all belongin' to us, to the last day you draw breath," said the man, as he was about to follow Mr. Pratt out of the barn; "an' here, Miss," stepping up to her, while he passed her chair, "here's a bit of a petition, like, on another matther, that we put into your hands for his honour, knowin' you'll do your best with him, for us, only you won't open it till Square Pratt comes back, an' then give it to himself to read, or maybe to his reverence there, an' so, a good night, an' God reward you."

Ellen, promising her influence, took a sealed letter from the man, who then slowly left the barn, in Mr. Pratt's steps.

This little incident partly relieved the uneasiness and embarrassment of Redmond's appearance at the pane of glass. The old clergyman spoke on common topics to the young ladies, or kindly or jocosely to the bride. Miss D'Arnell and Ellen also addressed her, occasionally interchanging between themselves, a ceremonious and honied word; for the latter, recovered from the surprise of seeing her lover at the window, enjoyed good spirits in the hopes of soon hearing he was safe; and the former, repenting her late haughtiness to her gentle rival, would show that she was, in the first place, perfectly at her ease, and, in the second place, graciously disposed to be affable.

Kitty was again called out to dance; Ristharde and her brothers, leaving Mr. Pratt and his clients quite alone in the house that they might more effectually discuss their law point, also joined the revellers, and the mirth grew more energetic and boisterous than before. More than half an hour might have elapsed, when Ellen began to think her father staid away very long; but the recollection that he was engaged in doing a kind service to his humble suitors, curbed any expression of uneasiness. Soon after, Mr. Fenelly remarked on that gentleman's absence, and Ellen grew alarmed. At her instance, one of the bride's brothers went out to see what detained him with the strange men, and returned, looking pale and frightened, to announce that the house was quite empty; neither Mr. Pratt nor the new comers appearing in it.

All expressed themselves in words of surprise or apprehension. Ellen's sensitive heart misgave her. The two priests,

accompanied by a crowd of men, went towards the house to ascertain the truth of the story, and once more the revels stopped; and, amid whispering and conjecturing, the throng awaited the result of the investigation. Mr. Fenelly, his coadjutor, and their friends, soon came back, their features expressing the confirmation of the first account.

"He has left the house with those men, to a certainty," said the old priest.

"Musha, an' God help us!" cried Mr. Cotteril, as he entered, in perturbation, yet not forgetful altogether of his usual reflective pace, and, as he styled them, "his asy, quite civilments." "The Lord's blessin' be about all within an' without here! God save ye, God save ye, neighbours, every one!" softly clapping his hands, as he pressed into the middle of the now altered festive hall, if we may be allowed so to name Michael Tobin's barn. Notwithstanding his blandness, there was a mixture of terror in his countenance that made him look like a frightened ox; while five or six servants and helpers, who accompanied him, showed the like symptoms of agitation. "Where is the poor masther, neighbours, dear?" Mr. Cotteril continued; "oh, Miss Nelly, my pettheen, there's bad work done!"

The throng gathered round the other servants, who were immediately engaged in giving vociferous and clamorous accounts of the occurrence they had to detail, often interrupting each other, as one thought his fellow related the tale the wrong way, or did not begin it at the right end. The landsteward continued to address himself to his young lady.

"Oh, Miss Nelly, Miss Nelly, where's the masther, till I tell him, afther a manner, the misfort'nate story?"

"What is it?" gasped Ellen.

"Long sorry is Bill Cottheril it's come to his turn to say sich things to you, Miss Ellen, pettheen; bud the grand fine plate is gone, every morsel in the wide world—and the last rents, likewise, that cum from the poor cratures o' tenants, and from their hard arnins the live long day, the poor sowls, God relieve 'em!—" He made a pause here, that "the poor tenants" might have due opportunity to appreciate his kindness to them; but the winks and other signs which passed, unseen by him, among the poor tenants, who were listeners, seemed to argue that, notwithstanding all his tact, Mr. Cotteril and his smooth tongue went for little more than they were

worth, in general estimation; "an' nothin' left," continued Mr. Cotteril, bud the sthrong box in the closet, that was too heavy to take away, an' that they couldn't force wid their hammers, an' their sledges, an' their crows, an' wicked did they curse, God forgive 'em, when they war put to id to lave the same behind."

Ellen's thoughts glanced from what she now heard, to the disappearance of her father; both events became connected in her mind, and she swooned in Kitty Tobin's arms.

"Who has done all this?" questioned Mr. Fenelly.

"Somehow or someway, plase your reverence," bowing low, "Cushneiche is the lad that done the work for us."

"How long ago?"

"I'm not over-bright in myself at any time, somehow or someway, plase your reverence, an' what little share o' sense God ga' me, departed from me, a'most out-an'-out; but I'd make bould to say it's goin' on an hour, or thereaway, sence they left us all tied up in a bundle, afther they had their good will o' the place; an' it's only now, afther a manner, somehow, we got loose, wid God's help, an' set out here to look for the poor masther: musha, plase your reverence, where is he, entirely?"

Mr. Fenelly related the fact of Mr. Pratt's unaccountable disappearance.

"Lord save us all, agin!—was one iv 'em a weeny middle-aged man, wid a green coat on his back, and a black plasther on his eye?"

"You describe him exactly."

"Then, by the G——!" sounding one palm against another —"Cushneiche has a hoult o' the masther, into the bargain."

While a murmur of astonishment and fear ran through the barn, Mr. Cotteril, suddenly recollecting in whose presence he stood, bowed low, crossed his forehead with such fervour, as to leave the mark of his thumb-nail behind, and added:

"The Lord be good to us an' save us!—see what I said;—to go an' give a curse, the first time o' my life; for it's a way wid me to be asy an' quite, your reverence, an' I ax your reverence's thousand pardons."

Mr. Fenelly, not heeding him, inquired for the note Ellen had taken from the stranger.

Miss D'Arnell, who, along with Kitty, now attended to the insensible girl, stooped, and picked it up from the floor.

The priest saw it had no direction on the back. He tore it open, and read aloud, that his coadjutor and Miss D'Arnell might hear him—

"To Miss Ellen,—do not be frightened—your father shall not be injured.

"CUSHNEICHE.
"REDMOND."

The last signature was announced by Mr. Fenelly, after much hesitation.

"Redmond!" echoed Miss D'Arnell,—"that is false;—the note is a forgery—or his name, at least, is forged to it;"—she had started up, completely off her guard. The priest approached her.

"Patience, my child," he said,—"patience; and now, this is no place for you to stay; we must get a number of the men present to join your own servant in seeing you safe at home;—more of them will be required to protect your poor little friend here," pointing to Ellen,—"and the rest shall come with me and Cotteril to seek out Mr. Pratt, and, if possible, get an explanation of *all* the circumstances of this extraordinary business."

"Thanks, sir—dear sir—for your care and attention;—*allons, ma mere*," to the bewildered old attendant. "Oh, sir, can you believe it of the unhappy young man?"

"I cannot—I do not; yet I know not what to say. Are you sure, my dear, you saw him at the window?"

"Good heaven! that brings terrible confirmation;—I am sure, sir. Good night—good night—farewell, good young woman," to Kitty, "and I wish you all happiness, and am sorry for this trouble on your wedding night."

"It's no throuble in life, Miss," put in Ristharde, coming to his wife's side—"divil a throuble, Kitty, a-chorra," whispering her; "an' I'll tell you why another time—an' you know where," smiling roguishly.

Kitty stared at him.

"Give my love and compliments to Miss Pratt," continued the young lady, "and say I hope and will pray her father may soon be restored to her. Ah! she revives—farewell, dear Miss Pratt!" Her feelings had broken down the barriers of pride and rivalry, and taught her to sympathize with poor

Ellen—"farewell!" kissing her—"I would stay to see you quite recovered, if I dared: or if Mr. Fenelly would permit or advise it. God be with you."

Miss D'Arnell hurried out of the barn, giving her arm to the old lady, and attended by her servant, and the formidable posse the priest had already appointed to be her body-guard on the road home. Seated in her saddle, she gave the rein to her fleet little steed, and set off from the farmer's house in the precipitancy of unchecked and powerful emotion. Her servant called after her to announce, respectfully, that *Madame* was not yet secure on her pillion, and he, therefore, not in readiness to attend her. The fiery young lady heard or heeded him not, but continued her gallop down the borheen to the main road; and as none of her rustic guards were mounted, not having contemplated a necessity for such great dispatch, she was therefore alone.

At a short distance from the end of the lane, a man sprang over the fence, and flung himself before her horse. He was haggard and agitated, and the moonlight showed his dress to be soiled and torn. Miss D'Arnell knew him at a glance, and pulled up.

"Redmond!" she cried.

"That wretch—that outcast!" he answered, "who only seizes this opportunity to see you, for the last time—hear the sound of your voice, for the last time."

"All is true, then?"

"The worst you can have heard of me is true," he answered. "I stand before you a branded man—the blood of a felon in my veins—a creature whom it is disgrace to have known, whom it would be destruction to know any longer—an accursed being! hurled, in one hour, from the height of worldly character, of youthful hopes—and oh, more than all—of the chance of an angel's love—down to the very lowest depths of infamy. Farewell! farewell!—forget me, for ever!—call our intimacy a hideous dream, from which you have just awaked. You can never see me again—I shudder at the thought—farewell!" He was rushing from her—

"Stay, a moment!" she cried—"only one question—what is your present situation?—do you allow this dreadful discovery to sink you, by your own actions, lower than *it* could?—where have you been lurking?—how engaged?—with whom? unhappy Redmond, with whom? Answer me—what

brought you to the barn?—did you know of the robber's intention to take off your guardian?"

"I did. And now, at least, you will not bid me stay; nor can I, if you bid me. I hear the noise of the pursuit that outlaws tremble to hear, and I must fly from it—here come your friends, and—along with all the world—my persecutors; —I say, Rosalie D'Arnell, we part, this night, for ever."

He darted over the fence at the side opposite that from which he had appeared, and was quickly lost to view; diving down the inequalities that fell to the river. Her servant and the peasants came up, and escorted by them, she now rode home slowly and silently.

CHAPTER VI.

Cotteril's account of his observations of Redmond upon the night he left Mr. Pratt's house; the allusions of the two old men on the village bridge, and, indeed, the young man's last appearance, and his own acknowledgments, seem to require a plain and speedy detail (for we dislike unnecessary mystery) of his real adventures and conduct since the first evening he and the reader parted company.

Educated and brought up in liberal feelings, confirmed in them by liberal association, and a sense, however vague, of rank and place in the world, it will not be wondered at, that the brief explanation Redmond finally compelled his guardian to yield, upon the evening of their last interview, should have produced in the youth's bosom the kind of frenzy which has been noticed. The sudden shock acted, too, upon a nature, not of the gentlest, though, in many respects, of the noblest description, and was therefore felt more violently.

Mr. Pratt has called Redmond "dark;" and, with some allowances for exaggeration, it is admitted that the commentator was, in a degree, right in his view of character. Perhaps strong minds and hearts generally show less of amiable evenness than weaker or softer ones: at all events, there was about this boy's temper a something that would not invariably bend to confidential freedom with all who thought they had a right,

either on account of youthful equality, or of years and relative situation, to expect it from him. He was not impatient or hasty, few ever saw him in a passion; he was not gloomy, even, for he would race after the hurling-ball, and shout as he struck it high, and take or give a fall in wrestling during the game, as heartily and as laughingly as any of the neighbouring peasant-lads, with whom he condescended to mingle in the truly national sport. His jest, and smile, and wink, and perhaps something else, used to be ready, too, for every red-cheeked country girl that tripped by him on the road, or in the field, during a day's shooting or coursing; and in a summer meadow he was that kind of person who would tumble about in the new hay, playing with a child; but also that kind of a person who did not lower himself by the vagary, and who would not allow any man to play with him, when his gambol with the child was over.

While amusing conversation went on at table around him, Mr. Pratt and others have often vainly asked Redmond why he was abstracted? or why, when every one else laughed, he looked grave? or, on the contrary, why, when all were wrapped in some serious topic, he alone smiled? He would, on such occasions, merely answer that he was unconscious of what they taxed him with—and he was; for the long, vague look, or the faint smile, just moving the closed lips, were evidently but mechanical responses to the mind's gaze upon some difficult question; or to its glow over recollected or anticipated happiness; or, perhaps, to its indifference or contempt of something passed by, or yet to come; none of which lapses it would, had it been conscious of the outside show, have naturally trusted to observation.

It might be, that thoughts, irresistible at his age, upon his prospects, his pretensions, and thence upon the question of his parentage, only now called up with vigour, had lately given a more decided turn to his complexional reserve or depth of character. And again, the ever-recurring image of the lady whom he had dared, within the last year, to love, and the incessant reference from her to his future hopes of possessing her, continually kept him agitated, with, for the first time in his life, reveries as selfish as they were absorbing.

It has been said that he was seldom seen in a passion, yet some have witnessed him in one; and then, the vehemence of the fit certainly balanced the virtue of its rare occurrence. If

really stirred up, Redmond's frenzy shook him to the centre, terrified all around him, and, working his body like a machine, flung him headlong, he knew not whither, upon the first course that presented itself. And if, in earlier boyhood, such had been the effect on his constitutional temper, on but slight occasions, we can more easily conceive the excess of passion that, on the present, sent him bursting out of his guardian's house, late at night, with cries and imprecations on his lips, joined to deeply-muttered vows, never again to cross its threshold.

It is true that, as Cotteril has related, he first took the level road to the village; and, indeed, for once in his life, at least that person has already given to Mr. Pratt a pretty true account of such of Redmond's conduct as came under his observation. The despairing boy ran, bounded forward, until a recollection that he was hastening to face the village crowds, whose regards and whispers he could not now encounter, checked his speed, and, after a wild inquiring look around, urged him to cast himself by the road-side, in a fit of complete abandonment. Here the broken, but beautiful image of another person started across his mind; again, he sprang up, cursing his birth, and the unknown parent who had left him to disgrace and misery, and ran against the rising ground at his left hand.

This was the hill spoken of by Cotteril. The carriage-road to the village curved round it. A second road, narrow, rugged, and strewed with stones and rocks, led, as he and some other wise persons thought, in a shorter line to the same place, mounting boldly almost to the summit of the hill. But from the point at which Redmond began to ascend, there was neither road nor path; and he held his way, through clumps of furze and briers, at right angles with the course in which Cotteril was racing to intercept him. He wanted no path that might conduct him to the dwellings of his fellow-creatures, or bring him in contact with them. He only cared to recollect that the top of the ascent, some distance across the climbing road, was lonesome, untenanted, and uninhabited; and that there he could fling himself down, and indulge his present mood. Through every obstacle, he soon cleared the steep of the eminence, shot over the narrow road, bounded upon some rude fences of dry stones, pressed against the last piece

of sloping ground, and found himself in the midst of a flat stretch of, as he had anticipated, waste land, which formed the summit. On every side furze, rushes, brambles, and other bushes, were grouped, in clumps, with large stones, black under the shadow of night, or, here and there, with upright conical rocks, splintered at top and cleft asunder—the protrusions or extremeties, perhaps, of more enormous masses buried in the hill. Under his feet there was, in one place, soft, elastic sward, made by a depth of moss, and ages of decayed vegetation ; and, in another, patches of slaty rock, bedded in the soil, and level with it. Redmond threw one glance around, to select, for his solitary and misanthropic retreat the meetest spot ; and, as if satisfied with his scrutiny, was springing on, when his toe touched something soft, amid a large tuft of furze and rushes, and he was sent staggering forward.

Ere he had recovered himself, a man, starting from the tuft, confronted him, and in an easy, yet peculiar tone, said, "*Bannochth-lath*, gossip."

"Fool!" growled Redmond, as he turned to hasten from him ; "what sent you here, at this time of the night?"

"The thing that didn't send yourself, if a body is to judge by the hurry you're in, an' the way you have with you," answered the man ;—"the sleep sent me here ; an' it was on me when your foot kicked me to waken me, I thank you."

"You came to sleep *here?* in such a place as this?—You have no roof to cover you, then!—you are poor—a wretch and an outcast?"

"No roof to cover me?—that's a small mistake ; I have, many's the one."

"Go home, then, and snore under it ; this is no haunt for you ; good night, man," said Redmond.

"A good night, then ; but stop a bit, if you plase ; just a neighbour's word with you," walking quickly after him.

"Well, my good fellow?"—stopping and fiercely facing the stranger.

"Here it is," replied the other, presenting a long-barrelled pistol—"here it is," jocosely repeating the words as he cocked it, "an' all it'll be axin' o' you is whatever thrifle you have in your pockets—aisy now,"—as, with an exclamation of "Rascal!" and a sudden spring and blow, Redmond darted on him, knocked the weapon out of his hand,

and brought him to the ground. Indeed, in a contest of bodily strength, his low and light-built antagonist had little chance against Redmond's great height, nerve, and vigour, assisted as he was by the desperation that now maddened him.

"You done it, faith," said the man, slowly rising; "an' now don't be tellin' it to the counthry, wide, to get me into more disgrace than ever fell on me afore, on Ireland's ground, or in other places that ar'n't in Ireland, maybe;—for divil a mother's son, barrin' yourself——"

"Here, fellow," interrupted Redmond, throwing him all the money he could find in his pocket, "never say it was in defence of this thrash I soiled my hands with you; and, after all, perhaps you want it: good night again."

"Stop, a-bouchal, stop,"—gathering up the pieces—"stop, an' this is the second time I bid you; if I take one o' them from you *now*, may they walk down my throath afther the manner of a —— stop, I say!—stop, now, in arnest!"—he held close to his vision one of the pieces, and, in the weak light of the rising and clouded moon, seemed to examine it very anxiously—"Mother o' heaven! what's this? where did you make off this?"

"What? what, man?"—Redmond returned quickly to his side, and also peered at the coin. "Give it me!" he resumed; furiously, after a second's observation—"I didn't intend to part with that: give it, or——"

"Arrah, bother, to be sure I will, as well as all the rest; but how cum it into your hands? that's all I want to know; an' isn't it a civil question?"

"No, man!—it's an impertinent question:—why should you ask? don't you see the piece is not one of the coin of these countries—perhaps not a coin of any country?—go home; farewell;"—he now had it again in his possession.

"No, faith, nor a coin at all, maybe," resumed the man, "only a family keep-sake, like, an' what we believe they calls a meddle; but there's a kind of a notion cum into my head that I seen it afore now," he continued to walk after Redmond as he spoke; "an', moreover, if *you* got it from the right hand or in the right way, there's another sort of a notion cum across me, that I could tell you something of the friend that gave it to you."

Redmond started and stopped. The medal had, indeed,

been his, from infancy; but he knew not to whom he was indebted for it, although, within the last year, he had often dwelt on the hope of being able to trace the donor.

"What friend do you mean? supposing you right or wrong in your notions, what was that friend to me?"

"Why, nothing more nor the misfortunite man they called your father."

An electric ball suddenly bursting before his eyes in the darkness of night, could not have more stunned Redmond than did this answer, carelessly and lightly worded as it was. He turned and gazed upon his follower in breathless consternation. In a moment, however, the tide of his former frenzy rushed back with increased swell; and, partly maddened by impatience for an explanation, partly by a sudden fear that the speaker, already aware of his shame, meant but to jeer and taunt him, he once more sprang upon his chance companion, collaring him and shaking him as he cried—

"Ruffian! if you cannot—do not fully explain that word—instantly, too, and to my satisfaction—by all——"

"Thunder and fury! let me go, boy!" cried the man, suddenly and with great agility freeing himself, while his manner showed a dangerous irritation and fierceness that had a mixture of the snarling terrier and the tiger-cat in it; "keep your hands from me, I say, or, afther all, it may be the worse for you; I have another spakin'-thrumpet left, let alone a little thing that never misses fire; keep back, I bid you! was there ever sich a born fool? you don't know, boy, into what a scrape one whistle on my little finger can bring you; be quiet, an' let us talk; I'm used to have my word obeyed, an' you, of all livin' cratures, have a right to mind it; stand where you are, gorçoon, and listen to me well."

"I stand, fellow, not on account of your absurd threats, but to hear you speak, and you are yet within my reach, and yet I warn you, that if you do not fully explain your random word, and in explaining it, if a syllable escapes you concerning the man you must prove to be the man you mentioned—a syllable of slight or reproach which you cannot also make good—or more, a syllable giving account of wrong done upon him, to the authors of which you do not instantly direct my vengeance; if one of these conditions be forgot by you, prepare yourself. We are alone on this hill; that's enough—you know what I mean."

"Well," answered the other, coolly, as, his head bent, he seemed to arrange his thoughts to some pressing purpose.

"Go on!" resumed Redmond, while the man was still silent.

"Yes—there it is," muttered the stranger, evidently coming to a point with himself; "that's it. I will go on, poor gorçoon; only you'll be sorry afore I'm done, for calling me them names, an' for the little thrial between us at the first goin' off, too. An' you must have rason, now; an' sense to undherstand that, afore I open my mind to you, it's only fair an' allowable I'd be sure you're the gorçoon I'd take you for."

"Be it so; but speak quickly."

"Very well. Now we only start from the post, over again. Where did you get this goold meddle?"

"I suppose I must answer you. When I was an infant, sent to nurse to a poor cabin in this neighbourhood, it hung round my neck; the woman who nursed me deprived me of it, while I was too young to be conscious of the theft. Many years after, her daughter, my foster-sister, learned from conversations between her father and mother that it belonged to me; and as the poor girl loved me, and moreover pitied me on account of a question concerning my parentage, which she saw weighed down my heart, the medal returned, by her means, into my possession. Now for *your* story."

"It's soon tould. You're no other than the young boy that was brought up in the attorney's big house, beyant, it seems, then?"

"Fellow, you trifle with me. Every one in the neighbourhood knows that only too well."

"Don't be callin' me them names, a-vich, I bid you again. An' I, for one, never knew you, to see you, afore this night; though that wasn't my fault; for many's the long mile, by sey an' land, I thravelled to find you out; an' at last, when I come to these parts, you were in Dublin, they tould me, and I thought you in it still. Sure, you can't be at home more nor a day or two."

"No longer. But what is all this to the question? Why did you come to find me out, as you call it? What business had you with me?"

"A thrifle. I made my way here to claim a good estate for you, ma-bouchal; an' afther that, to put in a little claim

for you, to yourself, on my own account; och Redmond, achorra, where's the hand?" He advanced, extending his arm, as if, in accordance with his words, he sought to give and take a greeting. Redmond stepped back.

"An estate for me? and to put in a claim for me? What is this folly? Man, do you presume—do you dare to trifle with me? Have a care; you can't guess in how ill a humour I am to bear it. An estate? what estate?"

"The house and lands Pratt houlds."

"Take care, I again warn you; you mean to insinuate then that I am that man's son, his base bastard, perhaps?"

"God forbid, a-vich; an' yet bad as he is, I'm afeard the world won't allow your father to be much a betther man."

"Scoundrel! there's the word I cautioned you against; and now make it good, or—— go on! How has my father become a mark for the world's censure? Heaven of heavens! Pratt's story is true then. Man! who was that father?"

"He that hung the little meddle round your neck, Redmond, a-vich, when he put you into Pratt's care, an' your good estate too—an' that can tell you every letther an' mark on the meddle, though he might only have it in his hands in the dark o' the night, when the best eye-sighth 'ud fail in makin' 'em out; an' no other, Redmond, ma-bouchal, are you to take the story from."

"What mean you?" a terrible misgiving setting him wild; "name the name of the person you call my father. Is he alive? where is he? how situated?"

"Alive, an' not far from you, Redmond, agraw, an'—but this is the sorest part to you; the neighbours call him one Cushneiche."

Without attempting to describe the feelings in Redmond's bosom, we shall only mention that, at an announcement so terrible, he was deprived of all power of utterance, silently and quickly falling back still farther from the speaker.

"An' there's no hand for me yet?" resumed his companion, after a pause, in a softened and reproachful tone. "Redmond, avourneen, flesh an' blood sees nothin' to hate in its own misfort'nes or misdoin's; it forgives an' forgets all to its own kin."

"You are the person you have named, then?" inquired Redmond, his voice sounding low and hollow, as he hugged his arms hard across his breast.

"I'm myself at laste, achorra, an' nothin' more or less to you than your own poor father."

"Stop! you must prove your right to that word before you use it; you must show me, clearly and circumstantially, how it could have happened; you must not leave a hair's-breadth of doubt unremoved. I hear but your assertion, wretched man, and scorn it. Though it leaves me here shaking with a dread never known before, I scorn it! But let me have the proof, I say, show me as clear as the day that will surely come, how it is I am—God of heaven! what I cannot utter—how it is I—*I*——mercy, mercy, Great Lord of the world! mercy only in that!" the miserable boy fell on his feeble knees; "or, before it comes—death—death! Before it is known—before *she* hears it—Common Parent, show me mercy! No!" he started up distracted, "I do not believe it—it cannot, shall not be true! No, no—Rosalie! it shall not!—or come—rather than that it should—rather than that—*that!*" groping for the pistol he had knocked out of Cushneiche's hand he tottered headlong, and fell exhausted.

The old robber stooped over him, and by a succession of soothing words tried, in his own way, to administer relief and consolation, at the same time raising Redmond's head. As soon as the youth grew conscious that his hands were round him, he again sprang to his feet.

"I say man, it is as false as the hell you shall suffer for it! Ah!" screaming, as a sudden thought came, "I see it now! you bring me a confirmation of Pratt's story, because you have been set on by him."

"Set on by *him?*" repeated Cushneiche angrily; "set on by the fellow I'm come here only to bring to his long account? By him that has wronged us both?—that thinks to keep your own from you. Redmond, a-vich, and that is the cause—or *I* wrong *him* much—why the father an' son were even forced to part, an' one sent on the road to evil doins, an' the other made his household dog? Avoch, poor boy, hear rason. I never knew you, I say, or what you war like, in the face or the limbs, till you crossed me on this hill to-night! or why I had the right to call you my own, till your own hand threw that token on the ground."

"How am I sure of that? how can I tell but——"

"Wait, a-cuishla: do you remember my first salute to you? do you remember the pistol at your head? if I was

set on you, or knew my own child, is that the way I'd come up to him?"

Redmond groaned in confirmed though less furious agony, and again his clasped hands and upturned eyes appealed to heaven.

"An' it's the heavy sorrow is on my heart, Redmond," resumed Cushneiche, "to be sich a father to sich a son; one that desarves the first and best man of this wide world to call him his child; but wait, a-vich, I tell you again. Myself is nothin' to myself, now; you, Redmond, it's you is to be considhered; an' for the same rason, let the world never know we are kith or kin. Let me stay here only till sich time as the ould attorney 'ill be made to give you your own, an' then no matther what corner provides me rest an' pace at last."

"Unhappy old man—wretched father! to whom, if this indeed be true, your child can never be a child—do not talk to me of estate, or wealth, or rank; talk to me only of all that can prove your horrible claim to my connexion with you—to my blood, the blood that runs in my veins; and if on that point you speak clearly—— no matter; I listen to you."

"Well, my poor gorçoon; first an' foremost, I can tell you the marks an' tokens on the little bit o' goold; then, I can tell the day an' place I gave you up to Pratt; afther that, I can tell you how much land I paid him hard money for, on your account; an' to make my endin' good——"

"These are still but your own assertions. Have you no witnesses to them?"

"Asy, a-vich; to make my endin' good, I can bring him to your face, with the Lord's help, an' if I'm a live man; when, if he doesn't uphould my story, through his own mouth, an' by rason of the little way we'll argufy it with him, why then, Redmond, a-roon, the red dhoul take the liars, that's all; an' I have no witnesses to show you."

"Impostor—though I know not why you should join in such a plot—yet, wretched impostor as you are, can you expect me to consign myself to perdition by believing you on a case so flimsy? or expect me to check the returning joy I now feel at detecting you out of your own showing?"

"How, Redmond, ma-bouchal?"

"How? If—I will not say if—but since you *have* been

hired by Pratt to destroy me—though I repeat I know not why—with this fable, what else should he do but confirm his own statement?"

"Asy again, man. Supposin', at the same time, we make him deliver up to you, saled an' signed, the parchments that gives you a right an' title to every sod he houlds, an' laves himself without a shillin', a beggar on the face o' the earth,—would that be like the thing? would that show him an' me to be cullogin' together? would that make it rasonable for him to tell a false story, that, when once tould ——"

"By ——!" interrupted Redmond, stamping furiously, "you shall do it, then, or you and I have but a measured time of this life! and when you have done it—for one of us, at least," sinking in his furious tone, "the time shall still be measured."

"I'll do it, Redmond; an' no need, a-hager, of threatenin' me or yourself on the head of it, either. Mind what I say. I know your father is a shame to you, but he'll draw far off as soon as you're righted, an' no one the wiser who or what he is; an' Pratt can asily be bribed to hould his tongue; an' then you'll have your good lands an' house to yourself, an' ——"

"No more of this, I repeat—not another word of such sheer mockery. The only thing you and I can now allude to, is the proof of your story; the only thing I want to know is, that you, a highway robber and outlaw, have indeed the right to call me by the name you presume to apply to me. Your former history, your family, your early pursuits, or the circumstances that made you what you are—even these points I fly from at present, as, until the time and place of your explanation, I fly from you; and when you tell me of that time and place, our meeting ends. So, where am I to witness Pratt's admissions? how, circumstanced as you are, warring with the laws of your country, do you propose to obtain an interview with him?"

"Don't fear me much on the head o' that. It 'ill jest all happen out of his own house (that isn't his own), an' in one o' mine. He's mighty shy o' me, I know, though not on this account, an' we must watch an' wait a little, to find him free of his faction; but it's a thing to be done, plase God, for all his cuteness."

"You mean to force him into one of your haunts?"

"Why, then, I believe you said it, Redmond, a-vich."

"If so, remember I am no party to your outrage."

"Never fear; an' God forbid I axed you, Redmond; only meet us, the present night week——"

"A week? do you think to put me off so long? Do you think I can be paltered with so long?"

"Asy, good boy; the bird isn't to be caught sooner. He must be clear of his faction, I tell you; an' it 'ill happen in this way. To-day morning, as we hear, a gossip o' mine went to give him the invite to his weddin', for the evenin' I tould you of; he'll come to the house in the day-light, with few of his people about him: my gossip, out o' love to you, because out o' love to your fosther-sisther——"

"What? are you speaking of Ristharde Roach?"

"Whisht, a-bouchal; it's not manners to call people's names at the present time o' the night;—an' there's some things to be let in to one ear, an' out through the other; never mind axin' too many questions; only, my poor gossip, I say, 'll give no hendrance, if he gives no help, when Pratt is onct in the barun: an' as I said afore, you'll have only to meet us about nine o'clock, outside o' the place, an', when we get him into our company, folly us, accordin' to your likin', over the road we'll be for axin' him to come."

"Supposing me to comply with your lawless arrangements, to which I once more warn you, I am, and shall be no party—do you expect to find in his pocket the documentary proof you spoke of?—the title-deeds, as I understand you? and the only proof which I will take to be undeniable?"

"No; he wouldn't hawk 'em about with him, I'm thinkin'; but a body may go look for them, afore givin' himself a call. Don't fear us, my poor boy, you'll get the satisfaction you want."

"Farewell, then—" he was turning off after a pause.

"Avoch, Redmond, is this the way you lave me?" Cushneiche again held out his hand.

"No, wretched creature!" said Redmond—"even supposing your tale true and proved, no, no, I say!—Even supposing Nature to have originally given you over me the near claim you say you possess, still, from my earliest infancy, you abandoned that claim—you left me to my own fortune and chance for twenty years——"

"Listen to the rason for that."

"Not a word!"—'tis useless, and will but prolong an inter-

course I shrink from. Say, you never had deserted your child, your present course of life cuts asunder, for ever, any accidental relationship. The Commandment cannot mean to bind a son of honour and honesty to love or honour a —— Oh, merciful heaven!—Unnatural, as well as degraded man! it would have been a mercy if you kept me by your side, even to familiarize me to your own life—even to corrupt and harden my heart—to teach me to sink myself for ever, that so I might be blind to your character, and that the robber-son might acknowledge the robber-father, as the tiger-whelp in the forest his tiger-sire. Yes, compared to the ruin you now bring upon me—the horrid struggle you have aroused in my breast—the despair and scalding anguish"—his voice became shrill as burning tears found their way—" compared to this and more, anything would have been mercy. Touch your felon hand?—take it in mine? No!—Keep your appointment; I will be punctual, if I can bear life so long."

He plunged down the side of the hill opposite to that which he had ascended; at the bottom, again met the level road to the village, which, as has been noticed, swept all round the eminence; bounded over it, with an eager and fearful look to the right and to the left, to note if he was observed; then down sloping grounds, to the river side; along by the water's brink to the village bridge: and, stealthily passing it, continued his course at the other side of the river, towards the group of ruins in one of which Padhre-na-Moulh usually lived.

CHAPTER VII.

It was Redmond's intention, if, indeed, any impulse of his present mood can be called an intention, to seek an interview with Padhre-na-Moulh. From many former little incidents, he had been led to entertain a vague notion that the hermit knew, or, allowing for his attributed wanderings of brain, fancied he knew something about him, in reference to his birth. The youth, during early childhood, became familiarized to the person of Peter, who constantly walked into the cabin where he was at nurse, silently begging a little food;

afterwards, they often met by the river's side, or on some other of the poor mendicant's lonesome walks; and it was observed that Peter never appeared near him without showing, by gestures or action, an unusual interest. Sometimes he would, in passing, lay his hand on the child's head; sometimes stop suddenly before him, and kneel as if in prayer for his welfare: and Redmond had a lively recollection of once crossing, at about six years of age, the wanderer's path, in a solitary place, when no third person was near, and when Peter, after first kneeling by his side and holding his hand, took him gently into his arms, and while tears ran down his cheeks, and low sobs and moanings escaped him, pressed the boy tenderly to his heart.

Redmond was sent to school, and afterwards to college; of course, their meetings became less frequent; indeed years often elapsed without one; and the youth remembered only as incoherent passages of his childhood, the notice and attention of his strange acquaintance and patron. Before his last return to the university, something occurred, however, to cast back his mind over those half-forgotten days and circumstances. Ellen and he were out rambling among the hills, and had sat down to rest, in the middle of a waste moor, when Peter suddenly approached them, alone. Their hands had been innocently clasped, before his appearance, and now were quickly withdrawn from each other. But, walking up to them, with, as usual, his eyes fixed on the ground, the mendicant, when they had bid him good-morrow, and when he had lowly bowed his head in acknowledgment, gently took a hand in each of his, again joined them, knelt, as if to invoke happiness on the union he would thus seem to propose, and left the boy and girl, as suddenly as he had come up, to recover, as well as they could, from the blushing confusion his singular conduct had caused.

About a year after, Redmond was still more interested by a rencontre with Peter. At this time he had seen Miss D'Arnell, and could think of nothing but her. It was a fine day, and he reclined, alone, on the bank of the river, idly, but, since the time of Shakspeare's Orlando, at least, allowedly, indulging the old lover-trick of forming the initial of his lady's name in the smooth sand that filled a little river-creek near him, now left dry in the summer weather. So R, R, R, for Rosalie was flourished, with his finger, all over the shining

tablet; when, looking up, he half-blushed to find himself detected in his pastime by old Padhre-na-Moulh, who stood, immediately over him, gazing down at his work.

"Well, good Peter, and how do you like it?" asked Redmond, not in a pleased tone. The mendicant shook his head, in evident token of not liking it at all; and then stooped, smoothened the sand with the palm of his hand, and, using the point of his staff, described, much to Redmond's surprise, a well-shaped E, in lieu of every R, he had defaced. After a pause, Redmond said, smiling, "No, no, Father Peter; it must be this letter;" and in his turn, he smoothened the primitive page, and restored the original characters. But Peter shook his head more earnestly than before—Redmond thought he even frowned—and, again stooping, wrote E, E, E, inscribing the letters deeply into the sand, and, when he had done, pointing towards Mr. Pratt's house, and signifying, by proper gestures, that Redmond should seek in it a subject for his alphabetic muse.

"Indeed, Padhre? and why so?"

A third time the mendicant prepared the sand for a new text, and wrote—"It is commanded."

"Ah, Padhre!" resumed the youth; "and by whom commanded, pray?"

His strange companion remained as if he had not heard the question.

"Who has the right to command me in such a matter, Peter? Do you know I am an orphan, without natural guardians, and such as might claim the right?" Still no motion gave an answer to his questions. "I say, Peter, no human creature lives qualified to control me, in anything I choose to do or to fancy."

At last Peter seemed to hear. Once again he made the sand level, and inscribed upon it—"Yes—there live those whose bidding you should heed;" and while Redmond, with extreme wonder, pored over the sentence, Peter suddenly walked away, nor could entreaties draw him back.

For some time the incident left a strong impression on Redmond's mind, and he afterwards threw himself more than once in Peter's way, in order to obtain, if possible, an explanation of the last words written on the sand. But the mendicant would not attend to his questions, and, if closely pressed, only pointed solemnly, and with a show of earnest

exhortation, to Pratt's house, and renewed his signs that there, and there only, Redmond was to bestow his affections. This obstinacy at first irritated him ; and then, as time wore away (much of it in the company of Rosalie), and as he began to recollect the rumour, credited by the more reflecting people in the neighbourhood, of Peter's insanity, he tried to dismiss all idea of the occurrence as one which ought rationally to interest him. The poor man's early notice of him could have been nothing, Redmond argued, but an arbitrary impulse of his weak mind ; and, working up his own prepossession, Peter had now merely invested himself with a right to dictate to his protégé upon some whim, of which the solution could only be found in the incongruities common to madness.

Yet, after the receipt of the note from Count O'Ruark, the finding of the scrap of Mrs. Pratt's letter, and, particularly, after the sudden declaration of his guardian, which had sent him raving out of the house, Redmond's thoughts went back, in spite of him, to his interview with Peter by the river side : as he clambered up the hill, upon this night, an impulse again to challenge the solitary, in his ruined abode, often occurred, and now, giving way to what, in a calmer moment, he would have thought a weakness, the youth rapidly, though stealthily, pursued his broken path to the old castles.

He soon gained them. They lay within a short distance of the water, occupying about an acre of ground, which was left untilled and neglected, and as if delivered up, in reverence or fear, to be a domain unto the relics of former times. Heaps of their own stones and rubbish, that, during century after century, had become piled around them, were, in many places, now clothed with soil and long grass and weeds, so as to give the appearance of natural little hillocks, which grouped, irregularly but pleasingly, with the ruins that still endured. Indeed, as has before been said, the ground all about them had gradually risen so high, that a good portion of their bases were buried in it.

As Redmond hastily stepped into the little solitary region, the objects which first confronted him were two detached portions of arched aisles, blackly relieved against the less deep sky, and allowing passage, through their arches, to floods of watery moonshine, that came bursting, now and then, from wreaths of low, racking clouds. These ran at right angles with each other, and yet might once have been but parts of

one connected pile; over them, at some distance, arose the pinnacled and shivered heads of two or three square towers, or castles,—also standing out blacker than the heavens, and admitting weak gleams through their pointed windows and cracks. To his right and left arose others of a similar shape, half light, half shadow, whenever the fitful moonbeams fell on them; and at his back, as he entered the place of ruins, was the peculiarly-shaped, square castle, most fully catching the intermittent ray, because directly facing its source, in which, as he had often been told, the solitary resided. No pathway was distinguishable through the encumbered and tangled ground; and it was overspread by a deep and melancholy silence, that, at every step he took, seemed to become dismally broken by the murmuring or whispering echoes.

Stumbling over the inequalities we have described, and among loose stones and prickly weeds, or slippery grass, Redmond found his way to the base of Padhre's castle. He looked up, hoping to catch a red gleam from its windows and slits, that might announce an inhabitant within: no light appeared through any of the blank orifices. He walked round the building, in search of a door or entrance; none met his eye, upon a level with his feet; and a little more observation showed him that the rugged and abrupt ascent up which he was obliged to clamber to the castle, was, as before generally noticed with respect to all the others, a heap of its own fragments, that, in course of time, had mounted higher than the original doorway, completely blocking it up from use or view. But at one side of the square ruin he saw a large window-hole, also square, to be gained by a little climbing, and which, from stepping-marks under it, and the polish on its lower edge, seemed constantly in use as the entrance to the building.

With slight exertion, Redmond got in at this window, and found himself upon a narrow, corkscrew kind of stairs, continuing above him, as the partial and flitting moonbeams allowed him to observe, and also twining downward from where he stood, into, as he rightly supposed, the ground-floor of the castle. It struck him that Padhre was most likely to choose for his retreat this lower and obscured region, which, from the pilings of stones and rubbish abroad, might now be regarded as a kind of subterraneous cell; and acting upon this idea, he descended the steps.

As he looked down to measure his way, he could not see where, or in what manner they ended; for, at the distance of a few yards, impenetrable darkness baffled his eye, the stairs seeming to rest upon a void, or to become gradually shadowed into it. Cautiously, therefore, Redmond descended, placing his feet firmly, and clinging to rude projections in the rough wall at one side. After making some progress, he stumbled over a confused and broken mass, and fell. His first apprehension was that a breach had occurred in the steps, and that he should be precipitated headlong to the bottom; but he soon assured himself that he only lay prostrate among a heap of stones, which tumbling, from time to time, through the interior of the ruin, had, at this place, rolled down the stairs, choked them up, and forbid further progress towards the regions underneath.

Convinced that it was now useless to seek Peter anywhere but in the upper part of the castle, Redmond scrambled to his feet, and ascended the narrow staircase. It led him into an apartment, the full extent of the space enclosed by the building, of which the floor was earthen, the walls were bare and rough as the outside of the castle, and which was rudely arched overhead, sustaining another floor. Through large openings, at one side, the moon sent sufficient light to enable Redmond, after he had looked close for some time, to observe the features of the place. No human figure appeared. In opposite corners were two beds of straw and rushes, covered with coarse blankets, and fenced round with hewn stones, visibly culled from the heap of ruins below. He recollected the two old men who constantly attended on Padhre, and conjectured that this apartment, and these humble couches, were occupied by them, rather than by him. He walked round by the walls, expecting to discover a recess, but was disappointed. Issuing from the chamber, he gained the scanty landing-place, before the threshold of its low, square doorway, and observing that the twisting staircase continued upward towards the top of the castle, mounted it.

He arrived at a second landing-place, and a second low, square door, that gave him entrance upon the floor above the apartment he had just quitted. Here were no beds, and except the swollen and toiling clouds, no ceiling or covering. The earthen surface on which he stood, was encumbered with the fragments of the flat roof, that long ago had tumbled in;

for the luxuriant crop of weeds which flourished among the ruins, told that they were not of recent date.

In old castles of a similar kind, he had previously observed the construction of the roof or covering to have been a little elevated towards the centre, with, from that point, grooves diverging and running into a stone channel, which, attached to the walls of the building, received the waters that fell on the roof, and discharged them outwardly, through vents in each angle, upon the earth below; of such a roof the whole had, in the present case, given way, except that around two sides of the castle, the remains of the narrow water-course still projected to Redmond's eye, as he gazed upward, very insecurely and scantily. But having ascertained that the uncovered chamber could not possibly shelter the hermit of the ruined abode, he issued out again, and ascended still higher.

With some caution he stood upon the edge of the frail water-course, and looking across the space between him and the opposite wall, thought he perceived what he had been seeking, a recess such as might afford concealment to the object of his search. He was now on the summit. At either angle were the fragments of pinnacles, and, connected with them, indented breast-work, which rose above the former level of the roof; but at the side he was to cross along the water-course, this rude battlement had almost wholly crumbled away, so as to afford little assistance, in case of a false step, against the chance of falling, inwardly, among the ruins below, or, outwardly, a fearful height, to the base of the castle. The grooved path had all the appearance, too, of being but slightly supported by its insertion into the wall, and might give way beneath the foot. Redmond had soon traversed it, however, and gained the point he wished to examine.

A bundle of hay, tied into a close, hard mass, filled up a little arched door-way, and must have been pulled with some effort into it, for Redmond found himself obliged to push violently before it yielded, and allowed him egress into a cell, formed half in the thickness of the wall, half in a semicircular projection, on the outside, and scarcely more than six feet long, and four in breadth. A loop-hole gave passage to a ray of moonlight; and the reflected light from the interior of the opposite wall of the castle, farther enabled him, now that the entrance was open, to discern objects. Padhre did not yet

appear. His bed, of similar material and construction with those below, entirely occupied one end of the nook ; at the other end was a deal box, clumsily put together, upon which, from the polished appearance of the lid, it would seem he was in the habit of sitting. It was not shut close, and, urged by an impulse of curiosity, Redmond opened it. A strange mass of things struck his view ; some potatoes raw and boiled, some mouldy crusts of bread, a bottle of water, several pairs of musty old shoes ; a large missal, much worn, a wooden crucifix, rudely carved, perhaps by Peter's own hand, and a few curious articles, also probably the work of his hours of melancholy madness, when the hand weakly followed the imbecile wanderings of the brain. One of these little matters seemed an imitation of a pair of tongs, made by bending a sapling ash until its points nearly met, then hardening it over a fire, and then paring and nicking it into some shape with a knife ; another gave the notion of the hull and masts of a ship, another of a pistol ; all in wood. A wooden cup also appeared, together with the clumsy pocket-knife which had been, perhaps, the artist's only tool.

A small niche in the wall next drew Redmond's eye. Like the door-way, it was stuffed with a little bundle of hay. He pulled this out ; the place seemed empty. Groping through it, to assure himself whether or not it secreted any other curious article, he thought the stone, which formed its bottom, slightly moved. He shook the stone, found it loose, lifted it up between his hands, and discovered another box, standing on end and fitting close, a good way down, in an excavation made under it. With some difficulty Redmond next extracted the box, which was long and rather weighty, and brought it close under the ray that entered through the loop-hole. He reckoned to find it open, like the first ; but, although no lock appeared, it was tightly and firmly closed. It must be fastened by a spring, he thought : nor was he mistaken ; for, in pressing round it with his thumb, the lid started half open, and allowed him a view of the contents, and these contents not a little astonished him.

He first laid his hand on a closely-wedged row of little bags, filled, as he ascertained, with Spanish crowns, and gold pieces of various countries ; next, he drew out two cases of pistols, of different sizes, and richly mounted and inlaid, though tarnished by time ; and next, a broad-leafed hat turned up in

front, a cloak, a jacket or jerkin, small-clothes, hose, and half-boots, with spurs. In disturbing the folds of the cloak, a dirk and a locket fell on the ground. Redmond caught up the latter, and rose to examine it under the full influence of the solitary moonbeam. At one side it showed a tress of hair; at the other, initials which he could not decipher. Great curiosity possessed him at the discovery of this hidden treasure, and the matters that accompanied it, particularly the last. Bringing to mind the abject appearance Padhre always made, it was extraordinary to find such things in his possession. Were they his own? had they once belonged to him in a situation and character, which, for unknown reasons, he now voluntarily abandoned? or were they plunder—the evidences of a dark crime, for which, according to the village rumour, he had during twenty years offered, in his wretched and unsocial life, an expiation? The locket must have been, as almost all such things are, a little token of female affection. On whom first bestowed? on the present possessor, or some one from whom he had snatched it? And who was the giver? Redmond, in vague expectation, again peered closely at the initials, in the moon's ray, but with as little success as before.

A strong temptation arose in his mind to appropriate the locket for a time, examine it in the daylight, and when the letters were ascertained, try to draw from them, by reflection and inquiries, of what name and person they might be the remembrancer. Absorbed as he was in questions of self, exclusively, it was not surprising that, although unwarranted by any rational data, he should feel disposed to connect with his own mystery the present one. Padhre's early attentions to him also occurred to his heated mind in a shape more important than they had even before taken; and rapidly, though in a very obscure way, he linked together the hermit's fate and his own, and conjectured that the locket was the clue to explain both. In this view, he became resolved to keep it for a few days; at his leisure he might return to the castle, while Padhre was again out, and replace it; and Redmond was hanging it round his neck, inside his vest, by a chain to which it appended, when the sound of heavy steps at a distance, calling out the echoes of the solitary little waste abroad, caused him, in some confusion, hastily to cram all the other articles into the box, shut down its spring lid,

deposit it in its hiding-place, arrange the stone over it, stuff the little bundle of hay into the blind niche, and then hasten from the recess, and walking round a continuation of the watercourse, place himself at a ruined part of the battlement, upon that side of the castle which commanded a view of the approach from the river-side.

At a look he recognized Padhre, coming home, Redmond concluded, from one of his moody rambles. As the single figure moved through the intricacies of the obstructed ground, or appeared and disappeared over the little hillocks before described, sometimes half touched with moonshine, sometimes black in shadow, it gave, in costume and general character, not an unapt notion of the genius of the ruined place. Or, if stripped of superhuman fancies, and contemplated merely as a figure, the effect was scarce less striking;—exactly such a being, so wretched, so sad, so estranged from his fellows, and suggesting so many thoughts of a former and different existence, ought to be the human accompaniment to the scene.

While Redmond contemplated him, Padhre came very near to the castle, and his two old followers appeared limping after him in the distance. They must have seen Redmond on the shattered wall, the moment their eyes could catch it; for he had but just recognized them, when he was startled with their sudden scream, out of which the shrill tones of old Daddy Clayton arose, pronouncing, in a key that made the echoes ring—"Who's that! who's that! who's that in our house, lookin' from our wall?"—and the words were no sooner spoken, than Padhre, glancing up, and also seeing Redmond, added a loud, complaining, and frightened cry, and quickened his pace round the building, towards the entrance, while the hermit birds that, with him, tenanted the ruins, took wing from their ivy-nests, and, fluttering about, discordantly repeated his challenge.

Redmond soon heard Padhre ascending the stairs; his lengthened "Oh-h, oh-h," still kept up, accompanied by the scolding of the old men and the hooting of the owls without. He faced round, to be ready to salute the hermit when he should enter through the square door upon the frail pathway to his cell. In a few seconds, Padhre rushed in.

"God save you, Padhre!" Redmond began; "I have come to see you at last."

The solitary, not giving a glance towards the intruder, and only continuing his mournful and somewhat appalling cry, rapidly walked along the jutting ledge; gained his recess; entered it, with louder lament, as if at finding it open; stuffed the bundle of hay into the low Gothic doorway; and, so shut up, at last was silent.

Redmond, not able to traverse, with Padhre's precipitancy, the frail line of communication between them, slowly picked his steps to the forbidden retreat, and there continued to address the hermit.

"Good Padhre, you do not know me. I am your old friend Redmond, and I come to speak to you on matters of importance: take away the bundle, and let me in."

He paused for some answering motion inside. None reached his ear. He continued:—

"Or shall I remove it myself, to save you trouble?"

Still all was silence; and Redmond, owing to the state of his mind, grew impatient, particularly as the voices of the two old followers now sounded at the entrance to the castle, multiplying their indignant questions as to who the intruder might be, and showering curses on his head, whoever he was.

"I *must* remove it, Padhre, if you do not, for I really want your advice and assistance;" he pushed against the bundle; but whether it was now better secured, or that Padhre pushed against him, Redmond could not stir it from its place.

"Come out o' that! come out o' that!" cried the two aged beggars, now arrived at the point that led upon the ledge, and which immediately faced the recess. "Lave our house, whoever you are, an' whatever curse dhruv you into it!" continued Daddy Clayton—"what duv you want there?—what call have you to him?—let him alone, or you'll rue id!—let him be to himself, or you don't know what 'ill come acrass you!"

"Begone, you old idiot!" cried Redmond, irritated beyond bounds at the double interruption—"and get down to your own beds, both of you, or——"

"Or what?" interrupted the wrathful speaker,—"what do you threaten on us?—we know you now; but who cares for you, or for your likes?—what could you do to us that's in the hands o' them is your masther? Lave the place, we bid you, an' don't let *us* threaten *you*; we daar'n't cross over to you—

we're not bid to do id"—Redmond thought they rather couldn't cross over, or were afraid to venture :)—"but don't stop there to vex us well—don't stop there to make us say words you won't like to hear, an' won't like to feel either."

"Silence!" in his turn interrupted and scolded Redmond—"silence, old impostor, and get down, I say, lest I walk round to you. Padhre," turning his voice to the recess—"good Padhre, let me in; and, along with giving me comfort in my misfortune, rid me of these poor old wretches; for I am unhappy, Padhre, very unhappy, and, in recollection of our former friendship, I implore you to listen to me."

This appeal seemed to rouse the hermit: Redmond heard him move about, and then the noise of striking a flint and steel caught his ear. Daddy Clayton became also aware, perhaps, of these symptoms; for they appeared to add great spite and vehemence to his final address.

"Imposther! who's the imposther? them that the word is said to, or him that says the word? What is he, an' who is he? Is he what he puts up for? who knows?—Wretches! who is the wretch, betuxt us? Lave that, as you're tould an' warned, or may you never lave id alive!—lave id, or may the flag you stand on crumble undher your feet—an' now watch well if it isn't shakin'." Redmond, bringing to mind the frailness of his footing, did not feel comfortable. "Lave id, or may He that *can*, shake the ould walls into a hape o' stones above you! The throuble is on you, is id? May it never be off! may it stop on you till the heart grows as withered as the poor, an' the ould, an' the desolate, you spake your bould words to, this night!"

The bundle of hay was here pulled away, and Padhre appeared at the door with a light in his hand, and motioned the aged imprecator and his less boisterous companion to retire. They did so, down to their corners in the lower chamber, still muttering, in the impotent frenzy of age, threats and curses. In obedience to another gesture from Padhre, Redmond stepped into the cell; the hermit again blocked up the opening; then laid his candle, which was stuck in a clay ball, on the floor; pointed his visitor to sit on the box; sat himself on his couch; and there, with his eyes as usual cast down, waited to be addressed.

"I remember your early kindness to me, Padhre, and now,

when I am in trouble, come to you for comfort," began Redmond, not well knowing how to begin, and, indeed, not well knowing what he exactly wished to say; for, as has been noticed, his impulse to visit the old castle was obeyed without being investigated, and felt but in a very vague manner; while the additional interest created by his discoveries since he entered it, only increased his wish to address Padhre, without supplying any certain points or subject.

"I have told you I am in trouble," he continued, as Padhre remained motionless; "you see me to-night without house or home." The listener started. "Yes, Padhre; I have left my guardian's roof for ever." Padhre suddenly looked up, and fixed on Redmond the most inquiring gaze. It was the first time the youth had ever fully met his eyes; and now their deep and intellectual, although mournful character, startled him. They were large, black, and finely shaped, and quite free from the vagueness or the peculiarity of expression that bespeaks a disordered mind. After one earnest question with them, Padhre again cast them down.

"I will tell you why, Padhre; he spoke to me of my father:"—Redmond paused, to note the effect of this announcement; the hearer only shook his head: "he told me what he was, though not who he was." He stopped again; Padhre made no motion. "He told me he was a wretch, Padhre"—the hermit now interrupted the statement of his own accord, starting more vehemently than before, and a second time glancing hastily at Redmond, while his eyes kindled strangely.

"Is that true, Padhre? can you tell me, I mean, if it is true? In our former meetings, I sometimes fancied you knew my secret history; do you know it, Padhre? can you inform me who my parent was? can you inform me whether or not I am degraded in his memory? or does he yet live?"

His poor companion seemed affected, if not agitated, by these questions; yet Redmond could not decide if it was a consciousness, or merely his compassion for the story he heard, that produced the effect. Tears rolled down his cheeks, however; he breathed hard, and perhaps strove to control stronger symptoms of passion.

"You do not answer me, Padhre; yet you seem to give me cause for believing that you are not unacquainted with——"

A sudden raising of both hands, as if to disclaim the infe-

rence about to be drawn, interrupted Redmond. The hermit then rose, took from under his couch a rough slate, and with a piece of soft stone wrote upon it, by the feeble help of the light—

"Go back to the house; his daughter loves you: love her in return, and be happy. Peter has no more to say."

"Never, Padhre," answered Redmond, when he read this; "never shall I cross that man's threshold, until I prove his story true or false; and if I prove it true, never shall his or any other man's roof cover my head. As to your thought about the young lady, it is imaginary;"—Padhre made an insisting gesture—"or, even were it not, I have before told you my whole heart is given to another woman: but all that has now little to do with the present subject." Again Padhre interrupted him with impatient gesticulation, and would fain enforce that Redmond was to return to his guardian's, and forget all his troubles by uniting himself to Ellen.

"Tush, Padhre; you do not attend to me, nor care for my real interests. Is Pratt's hellish word true?" he continued, growing vehement; "answer me that, man, if you can and will; if you cannot, good night, or good morning, for I believe it is now near the daybreak, and let me go seek an answer over the wide face of the earth."

Padhre heard him, standing motionless, and apparently wrapped in the almost abject humility with which he was wont to take everything like ill-treatment, by whomsoever directed to him. Redmond was touched at the expression of the poor solitary; and from the want of interest, too, displayed towards the chief topic which concerned him, inclined to believe that all his notions of Padhre having really known anything about him, must now prove ill-founded and romantic. This caused him to resume in a milder tone.

"Well, old friend, you cannot help me, I see; so farewell!" He held out his hand. Padhre drew back; not coldly nor in dislike, but as if in avoidance of a greeting he was not permitted to give or take. "A wordy farewell, then, if you will have it so; and a farewell for ever, Padhre: I know I will have your prayers:"—the old man knelt down—"yes, I know that; for I remember your kindness to me when I was a child, though *you* will not remember it with sufficient interest to explain it;—an eternal farewell, Padhre, to you and your

old castle, and this country that I used to think my native country."

At the repetition of the words "eternal farewell," the solitary started from his knees, and, with shakings of the head and rejecting motion of his hands, seemed to refuse to part on such terms.

"It must be so," continued Redmond; "I cannot live here after my good name, old friend." Padhre grew more earnest in his expostulations. "No, no; this night, though I know not where to get the means, I start for Dublin; and from that place heaven knows whither."

The hermit made a sign that he should stop; paused a moment in deep thought; again wrote on his slate, and handed it to Redmond, who read—"If you are so obstinate, come to me again, though you will not go home: come in eleven days; I will think of all that troubles you, and ask and pray that you may get a relief. Think you of her that loves you, and whose heart pines for your love. Now God above be your guard."

Redmond had scarce perused these lines, when the light ceased to burn, and Padhre retired to his couch. Inconsistently indulging, for a moment, a recurrence of his previous thought that, in some way or other, the hermit and he were bound together in one fate, Redmond at last replied to the written command, "Well, Padhre, wherever I may now go, or whatever happens to me in the mean time, I will come and see you again in eleven days. And now, as you have said to me I say to you—God bless you."

He left the recess, and cautiously stepping over nearly two sides of the jutting watercourse, gained the staircase, and began to descend. He had not reached the bottom of the second flight, when he thought he heard a stealthy footstep above; and ere he gained the landing-place before the chamber occupied by Padhre's old warders, a heavy purse, as was at once indicated by the sound it gave, dropped on the stone he must step over. Redmond stooped; picked it up; and not doubting that his strange friend following him from the recess, had cast it down for him, unhesitatingly appropriated it.

As he passed the door of the old men's chamber, Daddy Clayton, roused by the heavy jingle of the purse just at his threshold, screamed out, "There, he's quittin' our house

at last, afther robbin' us, an' rune-in' us! Our hearty curse go along wid him! May every skhillin' he takes away" (really suspecting how the purse was had, perhaps, but jealous of its appropriation), "every skhillin' an' every goolden guinea turn into a red cendher o' hell's fire in his pocket!"—and Redmond, hurrying down, lost half of the good wishes of this kind that were sent after him.

He gained the river-side without a plan, and still at the mercy of every impulse. A new one started in his mind, and he at once obeyed it. He would hasten to Dublin, unbosom himself to an old and confidential friend, and solicit counsel and comfort. A town from which a mode of conveyance could be had was only a few miles distant. He walked on for it; gained Dublin in about ten hours after; found that his friend had gone to London; remained in his hotel, moody and solitary, during two days; then came out and called on some other friends, but such as he would not think of committing himself to; experienced from them a coldness and repulsion he could not explain, but from which he quickly shrunk back (it was, in fact, the result of certain letters Mr. Pratt had written to town, in anticipation of Redmond's arrival); thought of embarking for England, or America, or anywhere; recollected in horror and anguish his appointment with Cushneiche, and with irritating interest his other appointment for a subsequent day with Padhre; returned to the country by stealth; walked from rather a distant point, to Tobin's house, on the evening of the wedding; lurked about it until he had a second interview with the robber, that almost fixed him in despairing certainty; and afterwards waited outside until Mr. Pratt had been spirited away, and until his own rencounter with Miss D'Arnell.

CHAPTER VIII.

When Mr. Pratt unsuspectingly followed Cushneiche out of the barn into the house, he found a second man, wrapt in a loose outside coat, waiting for them in the parlour where the guests had been dancing before dinner. The hard and

bad expression of this person's face struck him the moment they met, and perhaps he felt a slight misgiving. But he was not allowed time for doubt or second thoughts. Cushneiche cautiously shut the door, as soon as they had stepped over its threshold, and standing with his back to it, began his real business.

"We're sorry for the throuble you'll have, sir; but afore you look at the deed for us, we'll want you home until mornin'—not a word, now, i' you plase;"—as the gentleman started back, and was about to speak;—"it might disturb the honest people o' the house, an' we're not for disturbin' anybody, when we can help it—so, you may's well—— Yallow Sam!" addressing his companion, in this interruption, "look sharp, lad." Sam instantly drew out a pistol, as Cushneiche showed another. "You may's well, I say, walk down the borheen wid us, quite an' aisy, an' have no fear of hurt or harum from us, in regard you're in the hands o' two gintlemin, every inch o' them; only if one word comes out o' your mouth, somethin' else 'ill be likely to come out o' this, or that"—touching his own pistol, and pointing to Sam's —"that maybe you wouldn't care to swally afther your wine, as well as a bit o' Kitty Tobin's bride-cake."

"An' if it's a hail or a talk you want, master," observed Sam, "you'll have enough o' that when we stow you on board."

"On board!" faltered Mr. Pratt, notwithstanding the threats held out, speaking, however, in a very low tone. Sam instantly put his pistol to his head.

"Stop, Sam; forgive an' forget, this time; though, sir," addressing himself to Pratt, "it's a brache of ordhers we can't overlook again; an' as to Sam's word, don't mind it; he was at sey onct in his life, with myself, too, an' he can't forget the sey talk, when it's no use to remember it; but this is all a waste o' the precious time; come, sir, no hurt is intended to you, I say again, on the word of a gintleman, if you walk fair an' aisy between us."

He opened the parlour-door, peeped out cautiously into the kitchen, listened, and then, with a sign to his comrade, stole on tiptoe towards the entrance to the yard, from which the crowd of beggars had retired, leaving a dead silence behind them.

"Come, brother, a grapple," said Sam, offering his arm. Mr. Pratt shrunk back. "Ha—" cocking his pistol, "no

mutiny, I tell you ; but, first, what cargo, eh?" rifling the gentleman's fob and pockets of his watch, a few guineas, and a purse of silver—" light enough ; but can't help that," putting up his prize, " an' now we're afore the wind, square an' tight."

Twining his great arm round Mr. Pratt's, of which the hard, uneven pressure felt like a coil of twisted cable, he conveyed him to the yard ; Cushneiche met them, also linked the gentleman, and the party proceeded to the road. At about the point where Redmond afterwards withdrew from Miss D'Arnell, they crossed the loose fence, and struck for the river side, avoiding the old castles, and approaching the water higher up towards the source. Ere they had made half way, however, down the intervening grounds, Cushneiche stopped, and pulling a large silk handkerchief from his pocket, deliberately folded it into the shape in which neckcloths are usually worn, as he said, " An' now we have to ax pardon a second time, but your honour 'ill have to put on this, afore we stir a step farther."

Mr. Pratt felt a hideous misgiving as to the way it was intended to be put on ; and when the robber motioned to arrange it, fell on his knees, and in a cautious yet distracted tone asked for mercy. Sam laughed savagely, and added, " Deep sey take the lubber, it's thinkin' o' the yard arm he is ;" while Cushneiche relieved the suppliant's fears, by wrapping the handkerchief over his eyes, and tying it hard at the back of his head. They then resumed their journey ; the two men again linking Mr. Pratt, and supporting him as he faltered or tripped during the continued descent.

He endeavoured to note in his mind the direction they were taking ; but he thought that the robbers sought to baffle him in the attempt, by doubling, more than once, to the right and to the left ; and when more than sufficient time for gaining the river had elapsed, and that still it was not gained, although its gentle ripple came uninterruptedly on his ear, he felt more assured of their tactics. He was, however, compelled at the same time to acknowledge to himself, that the manœuvring, although strongly suspected by him, put him so far out of his calculations, as at least to leave a doubt whether they were conveying him up or down the stream.

They walked him through a wood, evidently spreading over ground that still shelved ; but he was not able to decide on its situation, inasmuch as he knew two of the same kind

lying some distance asunder, and could not assure himself which of the two this was. Emerging from it, they dragged him again over open ground ; and finally stopped at the river's edge, where the rushing and broken noise of the water informed Mr. Pratt's ear that there was a fordable shallow. Once more he tried to calculate his position ; but, as in the former case, brought to mind two or three points, up and down the river, similar to this, and was unsuccessful.

Cushneiche whistled, and the footsteps of two additional friends were heard. The men came up, lifted him on their shoulders, and stepped into the water. His original captors followed.

When they gained the opposite bank, Cushneiche asked of the new comers, "How soon can we cross the other sthrame, boys?" "In no time," they answered, meaning "very soon." "Stir the shanks, then!" and he and Sam grappled Mr. Pratt, and walked him on.

The prisoner strove to remember of what stream they had spoken. He knew only one, which, running parallel to the river they had forded, lay some miles into the hills. While he was employing his thoughts on the subject, his guides helped him over a fence ; soon after, over another ; then up an eminence ; then along level ground ; then up and down again ; until, as before, he could not tell in what direction from the river they were travelling. But, in about half an hour, the angry rippling of water a second time sounded near ; and a second time he was raised on the shoulders of two men, and carried across another ford. For some hundred yards he could now be sure that he was urged on in a straight line ; and at last his conductors stopped. He heard the noise of tumbling stones, as if clearing away from some spot before him, and he was ushered into a retreat, where, as he cautiously stepped along, for about ten yards, his footsteps, and those of the persons who accompanied him, were prolonged with a hollow reverberation. He judged that he passed through a vault of some kind ; but in what part of his neighbourhood such a thing, so circumstanced, was situated, Mr. Pratt could not conjecture. While he walked on, he felt straw or rushes under his feet ; and a red light soon became sensible to his vision, even through the bandage Cushneiche had supplied.

Mr. Pratt was led by the arm to a large stone, and desired to sit on it.

"We ax pardon over agin, sir," said the robber; "but the gossip you're to meet isn't come as yet, an' till he's to the fore 'twould be a woful waste o' words to be spakin' to any other body round you; so you'll jist keep the mouth shet, like a quiet dacent gintleman; for Sam there—(he's handy by you)—has a knack for stoppin' a pratin' tongue. Sam, sit by his honor, an' mind ordhers."

Mr. Pratt heard the willing subaltern obey the command, and then the foot of, as he judged, Cushneiche, sound along the retreat, and die away abroad in the distance.

It was Cushneiche, who, tracing back much of the way they had come, at last gained a commanding point of ground, sat down and looked around him. The person he expected and awaited soon ran up, panting and impassioned after his farewell with Miss D'Arnell.

"What brings you here?" the young man abruptly asked. "He has escaped your plan, I suppose, and I am baffled again——"

"In throth he hasn't escaped; he's all-out in our gripe, under the arch where I tould you you'd find him. But, I tuck my place here for two raisons—first and foremost, to give the poor prisoner time to gether his wits; and next again, I want to discoorse you, afore you hear his story."

"We have discoursed a lengthened time outside the barn just now—proceed, however."

"Och to be sure, I tould you there how it was I came to make choice of Masther Pratt, to buy the grounds and the house for me and for you—for yourself only, I may say, Redmond a chorra. And I tould you how I met him and put you into his hands; and was forced to lave the parchments with him—to come back soon for 'em, and take 'em to myself, and so do the business clane, and that was my notion. You are now to hear the same story from his own mouth. Where I got the threasure I put into Masther Pratt's keeping, and why I didn't come back for twenty long years, isn't known to you yet a bouchal."

"It is not necessary I should know this. Let me guess the account you would supply. You got the money in a manner it is disgrace and almost death to think of, and you did not return because——"

Redmond paused, and clasped his hands over his face.

"Aye, Redmond, there is no need to tell you about it,"

Cushneiche resumed. "I took my way to England, to make sure of what I left there, when I brought you here to give you in charge to Masther Pratt. My mind was full at the time of laving the coorse I was in, of settling down as a grandee in my own counthry, under a dacent name, bringing you up to be a gintleman, and a good holy Roman boy—yourself or anyone else knowing nothing of bygones. Well, one of my closest comrades was false to me. The day I touched England's land, I was laid howld on, and it was thought to be a merciful judgment, that I was sent over the wide say, and not—no matter what—that's how it so happened, Redmond. I couldn't come at my brave Pratt, afther this trip up took the legs from me. There was no choice for me but to lave you and the parchments in a schamer's hands, and go on my long voyage, hoping all the while the day would come, when I might get loose somehow or other, and make my way to see you rightified. There was a close eye and a hard hand on me; and 'tisn't many months gone by, since I was able to bid them good bye, and make my way here to seek you out."

"And here you came, unhappy man, with your habits of twenty years before, again to burst forth from the old stem; you have committed acts since your return, disgraceful to your blanched head; and if your tale of consanguinity be true, branding indelibly your miserable offspring."

"I was wracked, and bare and friendless, Redmond, and what other coorse was for me? The only thrade to give me something, was the ould thrade; there was no use for me to thry and turn my hand to anything else. An' I'd never come to these parts only I wanted to gain a knowledge of you, by having a sight of you;—and I wanted to have speech with you: no one but yourself to be the wiser that your ould wicked limb of a father was to the fore. Morebetoken a-bouchal——"

"No matter," interrupted Redmond; "we will proceed no farther on this subject. Let us go at once to this examination you propose. Is your prisoner kept blindfolded, as you engaged?"

"He can't see a stem, the rogue: you may stand cheek by jowl to him, and he won't know who is there, if you keep the quiet tongue."

It was not Redmond alone the robber wished to keep from Mr. Pratt's view.

"Let us begone, then." Redmond walked forward.

"Ready and willing a-vich. Don't let it be a wondher to you, if you hear me discoorsing the attorney in another voice not like my own counthry voice. When I put you into his hands, I didn't spake the English in a right way to him: I wanted to throw dust in his eyes, and so I put on an outlandish kind of a chatter; making him think I was from foreign parts, to match the story I towld him, and the dress that was on me at the time."

"If you make your story good to him and to me, I shall wonder at nothing: we lose time, however."

Redmond and Cushneiche rapidly walked to the place where Mr. Pratt was in custody, with "Yallow Sam."

That gentleman heard footsteps approaching: he could distinguish that two persons were coming; he strained his ears to ascertain if the step of one of them was that of Cushneiche, to whose tread, as he left the robber's den, he had paid particular attention; and he expected to recognize in the pace of the new-comer, the approach of his ward, Redmond. But he had to argue cases with one as much alive as he was to such nice calculations.

"Harkee, a-vich," whispered Cushneiche to his companion, ere they came close; "the ould attorney 'ill know who you are, though he can't see a stim, if you don't walk short an' sharp, instid o' taking them seven-lague sthrides; by the hand o' my body, he could smell you if you stand betwixt his nose and the wind; so, just walk in like some other body besides yourself; the same that I will sthrive to do, plase God."

And, true to his plan, Cushneiche assumed a heavy, stalking gait, as he led the way to Pratt; while Redmond, following, broke up his usual pace into the kind of mincing one his conductor had recommended.

"That's neither one nor the other of them," thought Mr. Pratt, as they entered; "but I must be observant."

Cushneiche pointed to Redmond to stand in a situation the most remote from which he could perfectly hear the coming conversation. Then he at once began to question his prisoner, changing his voice, as he had promised to Redmond he would do, into a deep sonorous cadence, and affecting to speak in the description of broken English it might be supposed a Spaniard or a Spanish colonist would use; but as this

embarrassed, if it did not in a degree burlesque the rather important nature of the questions he asked and the answers he received, it will be as well to translate his gibberish into plainer language.

"Joshua Pratt, do you know why you are brought here, to-night?"

The prisoner started at the first sound of the voice and language, but after a pause, said, "No."

"Have a care; recollect yourself. Can you guess who asks you the question?"

Pratt again paused a considerable time, and at last answered, "Perhaps I do."

"Then you know why you are here. What has become of your ward, Redmond Redmond?"

"He left my house against my will or wish, and is now, I believe and hope, in Dublin."

"*Your* house? Go on."

"I will."

"You know there is more than one pistol at your head; and you ought to know that if you do not give true answers to all I shall demand of you, the bullets they hold may soon fly through your brain."

"Well, I shall speak under such an impression."

"You know too, or you fear at least, that the man who discourses with you is the man to give the sign when the triggers are to be pulled, because he has a right to judge the truth or falsehood of what you say."

"Be it so; I will speak the truth, and nothing but the truth."

"Hearken another word. You have done great wrong, and you know that too; wrong and dishonesty to an innocent child, and to a stranger who trusted everything dear to him into your hands. But it is not now intended to punish you; a true account of your own villany, and justice, at last, to the victims of it, is all that is sought. You shall not even be called to a public account in any shape; you will even be allowed to keep some of your plunder; if you make open confession I pledge my honour to that."

"That is generous; I acknowledge having done wrong, and am inclined to make restitution."

"God send it. But now mind yourself. Who is the father of Redmond Redmond?"

"I do not know; that is, I do not clearly and fully know."

"Have you ever seen his father?"

"I have seen the person from whom I received the boy, and who called himself his father."

"By what name?"

"Redmond Velasquez."

Cushneiche held up his finger to Redmond, who bowed his head in agitated assent.

"What did he represent himself to be?"

"A Spanish gentleman, partly of Irish extraction, who had amassed great wealth in Spanish America, and who was anxious to spend the remainder of his life in Ireland."

Signals again passed between Cushneiche and Redmond.

"What did you believe him to be?"

"I believed his story at the time."

"Have you altered your opinion of him since? what do you now believe he was? what have you reported he was, within the last few days?"

Pratt slightly started, and for a moment was silent, as if trying to accommodate his mind in the best way to a new circumstance of his situation heretofore unexpected, or at least now made certain.

"Why do you stop?—Cock your pistol, Yellow Sam."

Pratt again winced under the click, close to his ear, which instantly followed this command. He quickly recovered himself, however.

"There is no need of your threat, or of this shocking preparation, if, indeed, you mean to keep your word with me, and save my life in reward for the strict truth of my answers. I will reply to your last question freely. I have altered my opinion of the story told to me by the person who called himself Redmond Velasquez; that alteration of opinion was expressed in the rumours to which you allude; and those rumours went to say that my ward Redmond was, most probably, the son of an individual who had accumulated his wealth by repeated breaches of the laws that, in every country, protect property."

"You mean that he robbed and plundered for it?"

"Some such thing."

"Have you ever added, in the rumour, that, since his transactions with you, Redmond Velasquez had, in all likelihood, suffered a shameful death?"

"Yes; I came to that as a natural conclusion, because, unless prevented by such a fate, he would have returned to claim his child and his property."

"What was it that led you to form the belief you now hold of him? But stop a moment——"

The speaker was silent for a short time, then he continued—

"I see it will best suit the purpose for which you have been brought here—that you tell your own story of the connexion between you and Redmond Velasquez, commencing at the very outset, and continuing down to the present moment."

"Perhaps I may not acknowledge the right of any one——"

He was interrupted before he could finish his sentence.

"Listen to me, and mark my words well. He who holds you a prisoner has the right to question you. Having the right, he will use it. You are in the hands of one who cares little what may happen to himself. You must obey him or meet the consequences you have no power to escape from."

"My memory is confused, it may not——"

"Your memory must stand your friend, and listen to my words again. The truth, the bare and naked truth, without prevarication, must be told. He that speaks to you is able to detect the slightest deviation from the truth, either to the right or to the left. If you attempt to use deception, the attempt will be a failure—and will meet condign punishment on the spot—go on—go on."

"If I be compelled thus to make this statement, it shall be the truth."

"Proceed, then."

Mr. Pratt reflected for a few moments. To aid his deliberations the cocks of two pistols were ostentatiously clicked, and not without his notice, for the sharp significant sounds were not far from his ear.

"We are waiting on you," the former speaker said, and Mr. Pratt, doubtless coming to the conclusion that compliance in all premised particulars was his safest course, entered on the following statement:—

"But a short space of time is wanted to make it twenty years since my meeting with the man who called himself Redmond Velasquez. Previous to our meeting, I was, as hundreds remember, a poor and unemployed attorney, mostly residing in the village yonder. A letter came to me, from

London, bearing his signature, which instructed me to treat, in his name, for the purchase of a large estate, then to be sold, in the neighbourhood. He had recently been travelling in Ireland, he said, and, from a passing view, liked the property; and the letter added accounts of his rank and character, and of his wish to spend the remainder of his days in a country, to the people of which he considered himself partially allied. It then proceeded to instruct me to close the transaction with the vendors as quickly and as secretly as possible; to get title-deeds prepared in his name, and that of his son, which was the same with his; and to expect him over to Ireland, in a short time, to receive the deeds from me; and as my security, in obeying his wishes, the letter enclosed the halves of two bills on a Dublin house, of sufficient amount to make the purchase, considerable as it was, and leave an overplus.

"My first step was to hasten to Dublin, call at the house on which the bills were drawn, and submit the signature of the drawer; for the halves remitted to me were those which bore that signature. I was answered that the principals were ready to honour the drafts, and, moreover, had received advice of the drawing of the bills from their highly-respectable mercantile correspondent in London. After this, I did not hesitate to write from Dublin to Redmond Velasquez, acknowledging the enclosure, and professing myself ready to proceed in the purchase of the estate, so soon as he should remit the second halves of the bills. They duly arrived. I closed the business in his name, and prepared and had the title-deeds legally executed.

"But I did not as quickly register them. I began to have vague notions of a certain mystery about my unknown correspondent, of which, I argued, I might possibly take advantage. While in Dublin, I recollected some friends that had spent the greater part of their lives in Spanish America, and were acquainted with the names, at least, of almost every person in the country, who, in their time, had acquired wealth to the great seeming extent of the individual in question; and, without at all betraying the confidence reposed in me—indeed I guarded it for my own sake—I cautiously asked if they recollected the name of Redmond Velasquez. They had never heard it. I went on to ask if it was probable a person of that name could, for a series of years before, have

been acquiring vast riches in Spanish America, without their knowledge. They thought such a case quite impossible; as they had, themselves, been engaged in all the pursuits by which wealth was made in the colony, and were certain that, from their long residence, extensive mercantile and trading connections, and minute information, they must have heard, year after year, the title and description of every such rising adventurer. But they referred me to other sources of information, of which I availed myself; and every inquiry only added strength to my doubt, and I returned to my village, resolved to act very cautiously.

"In fact, I began to recollect that there were ways of amassing wealth, on the high seas of the Spanish Main, other than those warranted by industry and fair dealing. Or it was possible, I thought, for one of the freebooters who, then, more than now, infested the high-roads in England, to accumulate great riches without crossing the Atlantic; and if the money with which I had purchased the estate was obtained in any such manner, and could be proved to have been so obtained, I was not able to resist the vast hope of keeping in my own hands the produce of booty over which a pirate or a robber could have no legal control. So I avoided registering the deeds in the name of Redmond Velasquez; of course they were not registered at all; and I sat down to reduce my great and agitating speculations to some order, and to calculate, in case of the contingency I reckoned as probable, how I should act. I was poor, and the sudden prospect of wealth filled and disturbed my whole soul.

"I wrote to an old schoolfellow in London to make close inquiries as to who and what my correspondent really was. I gave the address, as supplied to me, and also the address of the mercantile persons who had drawn the bills, hinting an obscure suspicion, which, as my friend was also in the law, would, however, set him earnestly at work. To this letter I got no answer for a long time; my friend was out of London. But another circumstance gave almost the assurance which an answer from him, containing certain information, might have supplied. Redmond Velasquez did not come, as quickly as he had given me to expect, to claim his purchase;—weeks, months, wore away, and I did not hear from him or of him, in any shape. My over-anxious calculations began to flatter

me with the supposition that already some event, some discovery or unexpected chance, to which all persons of the character I had applied to him are liable, must have occurred to keep him back, and, perhaps, cut him off for ever, by death or necessitous self-banishment, from the enjoyment of his estate. My toiling and needy hands began to tremble with the pleasurable anticipations of a great change in life and circumstances, and ambition and avarice whispered delicious prospects, when I was suddenly brought to my senses, and plunged back into all my consciousness of laborious poverty.

"He came at last.

"My humble village-house directly faced the little inn, and as I stood at my office window, one dark and drizzling evening in November, 17—, a private travelling-carriage of a sombre colour rattled down the empty street, and stopped at the inn door. An arrival so unusual, in a place so retired and inland, did not fail to arouse general curiosity; every one ran to look out at their doors or windows; but no one felt the novelty as I did. I had been indulging one of my brightest visions, and it vanished like a dream the moment the equipage appeared; my heart sank in sickening omen. Some one got out of the carriage, entered the inn, and I stood sure of a summons. I was not disappointed. In a few moments, the landlord hurried across the street, knocked loudly at my door, and informed me, in breathless bustle and amaze, that a foreign gentleman, a prince, he believed, desired to see me. I said I would attend him. The landlord went back; I sat an instant, to summon up my self-possession, and to arrange all the points I could think of, and then followed him.

"I was ushered into the principal room in the little inn. A stranger, certainly wearing a foreign dress, and having a foreign air, paced quickly up and down the apartment. It was, as I have said, deep twilight, and I could not see his features distinctly; they were further hidden by his broad-leafed hat; but he wore mustaches, and had an air of mixed fierceness and nobility. The landlord, who had opened the door to me, asked, before he withdrew, if he should bring a light. The stranger answered no, in an abrupt tone, and commanded him to retire. I remained standing at the door, and bowed, repeatedly. For some time he took no notice of

me, although, in continuing to pace up and down, we often confronted each other. Perhaps, too, the state of my feelings and thoughts towards him, and the sudden arrival and view of a person so high and grand in his appearance and manner, at the very moment I had been investing him with a disgraceful character, gave a humiliated and mean expression to my face, person, and bearing, which deprived me, in his mind, of any right to the usual forms of respect.

"At last, suddenly stopping before me, he said, speaking in the foreign phrase and language you speak in,—and, as well as I can remember, the tone of the voice was the same, 'Your name is Pratt, and we have corresponded together.'

"I assented. He proceeded to demand if the estate had been purchased. I answered that it had. Then he called on me for the title-deeds. I readily replied, according to previous arrangement, that I had sent them to Dublin to be registered. He seemed not to understand this, but expressed and showed great impatience and anger at not immediately getting them. I explained the necessity of the proceeding, and, after a pause, he desired me to go out of the room, write an acknowledgment that I had purchased the estate, and executed the titles in his name, and on his account; that the latter were not immediately forthcoming, in consequence of the reason I gave; but that, on his speedy return, I should have them ready. I withdrew accordingly, and, at the same time, he walked into an inner room, and I heard him asking for lights. When I returned with the form of acknowledgment, I found him again in the outer apartment. He snatched the paper from me, and a second time passed into the now lighted room. In a few seconds he called to the landlord, who immediately attended him, and, as I afterwards learned, whom he caused to sign the paper, as a witness, having first ascertained that the man had just seen me writing and subscribing it.

"Again he joined me, and said, 'You will be the better of your connexion with this affair, if you are willing still to do all I require of you. I cannot now stop to take possession of my estate, being called away by pressing business to France, and it is with difficulty I have been able to spare time for my present journey; but I wish to leave my son in your care

until I return; and I empower you to take possession of the house on my estate, in his name and mine, to live there with him until I return, and to act as my agent, upon an annuity of five hundred pounds. Do you consent?'

"After a moment's pause, I gave an affirmative.

"'But what I wish you to do is to be done promptly,' he continued; 'you must take charge of my son this very night, if at all; and he is not quite at hand; his nurse and he got ill after the little sea voyage, and, as time pressed, I left them on the coast. Can you come with me this moment to meet them? Your refusal or denial makes us friends, or ends our acquaintance.'

"Thus pressed, and by no means wishing to lose sight of the man, or, supposing me to fail in higher aims, of the annuity he proposed, I at once consented. He then only delayed in the inn to recompense the landlord for the trouble he had given, when, desiring me to follow him to his carriage, we got into it, and were rapidly driven out of the village.

"It was about nine o'clock. The night fell fast and black, and, though sitting opposite to him, I lost all view of my companion. Scarce a word was exchanged between us. He never began to converse; and when I ventured a remark, or asked a question, he only yielded an abrupt monosyllable, which sounded as if I had roused him from slumber. At midnight, we gained the little sea-coast hamlet of ——. The carriage stopped at a mean public-house. He got out, desiring me to await his coming back. Ere he passed from my view, some seafaring men met him near the carriage, and, pointing towards the shore, spoke to him in a whisper. He looked, nodded, as if in assent, and left them. I also looked, and indistinctly saw the sails of a vessel, as if unfurled for a voyage. He soon returned, accompanied by two women, one of a foreign aspect and dress, the other a woman of the place. The former carried a child beneath her cloak, and handed it to the latter, who had just been engaged to take care of the infant as far as I was to accompany it.

"'There is your charge,' he said, handing the poor woman and her burden into the carriage to me. 'When you arrive at home, engage a regular nurse for the child. Take the carriage with you, as, until I return, I shall not want it; and take this too,' giving me a heavy purse, 'lest you have not sufficient money left for your new purposes; we shall strike

an account soon. Now, good night;' and, passing the arm of the foreign-looking female through his, both walked towards the vessel, whose canvas was spread to the wind. The child thus given up to me was my ward, Redmond Redmond. When his father had remained years away, that was the name I confirmed to him.

"The carriage drove back, without a moment's delay, towards my native village. I was in hopes of being able to gain, by questioning the driver, whom, at the inn, I observed was the stranger's own servant, some information or clue to all this mystery; but when, before daybreak, we arrived at our destination, I saw I had been accompanied home by another man, an inhabitant, like the temporary nurse, of the small sea-coast hamlet. From them nothing important could be expected; and I forbore questioning them, lest, in furtherance of a plan that during the journey I had conceived, it might be supposed I was at a loss to account for anything to which they knew I was a witness.

"That same morning I took possession of the very noble mansion attached to the estate. The woman who had brought Redmond home, I sent back to her hamlet, without a remark, and put the child to nurse at the farm-house, where I have spent this present evening. Then, prepared to account for the step to the stranger, on the ground of making fit arrangements for his return, in case he should return, I boldly set to work to form a household establishment commensurate with the considerable rental of which he or I was to be the proprietor: all the while avoiding to satisfy any of the numerous inquiries that I knew would arise as to my changed situation. My first correspondence with Redmond Velasquez I had kept, as I have said, a profound secret; no one had heard of such a name except the persons from whom I made the purchase, and they were English assignees, who long before left the country: it could not, therefore, be suspected that I was merely the agent of another proprietor of the property; the astonished neighbours would, I argued, at once invest me with that proprietorship; and I left them to unriddle, at their leisure, the mystery of how I arrived at such amazing good fortune. First, I secluded myself from all visitors, and so got rid of the trouble of giving vague or equivocating answers. Then I secretly left the country, and spent much time in Dublin; and when I returned home, chance threw in my way

a man who, by proper management, I found would be exactly the person to give, without involving me, the kind of impression I wished to have confirmed. This man was William Cotteril. He had been employed by my land steward to assist in the collection of small rents, and had therefore some access to me. I observed that, under affectation of great simplicity, he hid a griping sense of his own interests, a subserviency and a kind of devotion to any one that could promote them, and above all, a smooth and irresistible knack of gaining the secrets of others, or of insinuating whatever statement he wished to be believed. After attaching him to me by the means I knew would succeed, I soon detected him, during our half-confidential hours of business, trying to win from me some notions of how I had so suddenly arisen from penury into affluence. Not seeming to notice his view, or, at least, to notice it with displeasure, I took him in the way that served my purpose. First, I gave him vaguely to understand that a brother of mine, whom all the village were aware had in his boyhood gone to sea, died abroad in very flourishing circumstances. Next, that he left a son; next, that when I went to Dublin, upon receipt of the London letter, it might have been for the purchase-money of the estate; and then, the stranger with whom it was known I left the inn, might be the foreign agent who had charge of my nephew, and also of other effects of my deceased brother. But through all this story I never made an assertion. And, in conclusion, I hinted that for certain grievous domestic reasons, not to be explained, I was not left at liberty to bring up my ward in the knowledge of his father's name or character, or of the manner of his death. At the same time, I knew Cotteril would repeat every word I had said, with his own modifications and additions; indeed, I made him feel, unknown to himself, that such might be my wish; and he was precisely the man, in fact, to make himself useful.

"It was soon known that I wished no questions to be asked on the subject; and, although, in consequence of this belief, a taint might be supposed to attach to the memory of my brother, and to the way in which his wealth had accrued, yet the usual influences of riches did not fail in my regard, and I took my rank as a gentleman of great property, and my estated neighbours overlooked the doubt.

"All this while it is needless to observe that Redmond

Velasquez did not return. But, if he had, I could fear nothing from the story that prevailed. I could prove that I had never authorized it; I could challenge any man to say I had; and even if he suspected my tampering with Cotteril, I could make him assured that my obscure equivocation was only meant to ward off from him the idle curiosity and inquiries which he had not yet given me formal instructions to gratify.

"Years rolled on without his appearance or any communication from him. My original conjectures as to his character and hopes of investing myself with the estate, grew every day stronger. And a letter at last came from my London legal friend which made me almost certain. He had inquired at the address first supplied by Redmond Velasquez, and the proprietors of the house threw much question on that individual. No one in London knew him or his followers; the house which had drawn the bills forwarded to me, received value in raw bullion, at his own hands; he had left his lodging with a promise to return, which he had never fulfilled; much valuable property remained unclaimed behind him; and, most important of all, a few weeks after his departure, officers of justice had been inquiring about him, or some of his companions.

"From the first, my mind was embarrassed with respect to the child he had left in my charge. Justice, and justice even to my own feelings and conscience, required that I should bring up the boy well, and destine him to enjoy a part, at least, of the wealth acquired by his reputed father. But I could never acquaint him with his real claim, because I should then run the risk of being by him deprived of the portion I reserved for myself. While deeply considering the question, about three years after he was placed in my hands I married; became the father of a daughter; and now I thought I saw a pleasing future prospect of doing him full justice, and, at the same time, of protecting my own interests. I supposed it natural that he and my child, brought up together, in the same house, would form a youthful attachment which might end in their union; and thus he would eventually possess the whole estate, and, until my death, I should enjoy it with him.

"As the children grew up, my views seemed to prosper. When old enough to understand the nature of a mutual pas-

sion, I saw that they loved each other. Redmond, at nineteen years, paid to his young companion every attention likely to subdue her heart, and it was evident that he succeeded to a degree which made all her hopes of happiness in this life dependent upon him. And now I draw to a close. He has left my house without an adequate reason, just at the moment I contemplated his happiness. Occasionally, indeed, I thought it my duty to urge him to studies necessary for the proper formation of his mind, and for the due support of the rank and place he would be called to fill; but surely that was not an adequate reason; and, upon the night he disappeared, he provoked me, by, he will admit, wherever he is, very cruel treatment, to make an allusion to the fact of his mysterious parentage which, while I am very sorry for it, could not warrant his elopement, either. If the person who addresses me has any real interest in the lad, and if he knows what has become of him, let Redmond be advised to return to my house—to his own house—and that will be a better course. I may, indeed, be dispossessed of the estate; but that cannot happen in a very short time; and before it happens, the statute of limitations may come into effect, in my favour, and the law of the land continue me in the property I have so long held without a question.

"Or if, as from the first I suspected, a stain rests on his parentage, which it will not be for his honour or happiness to have known, there is no conduct so prudent for him to pursue, as that which I advise. It is evident that the persons now around me have a sincere interest in his welfare, and therefore they will keep the secret which they seem previously to have known, or of which my statement puts them in possession; I will keep it, for my own sake; and so, Redmond has only to form an alliance to which he has made honourable advances, and which, everything else apart, involves the happiness, perhaps the life, of an ingenuous girl, and the feelings of an affectionate father, and then keep his own secret, too, and all will be well.

"I speak as much for him as for myself, or for the young lady whose cause he has compelled me, however reluctantly or painfully, to advocate. And if friends or relations are at last arrived to urge his claim, perhaps I speak with a view to their credit and advantage also. Certainly, no good can arise to any one from unnecessary exposure; and I only wish

Redmond himself were here, to witness, from my own lips, the sentiments of sincere affection and anxiety I have always entertained towards him. I have done. What I have said is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as God can witness."

CHAPTER IX.

THERE was a prolonged silence after Mr. Pratt had done speaking. But the groans, the sobs, and the hard breathings of Redmond, might be heard in the pause; and as well, indeed, might they have been heard during the recital, which, at different stages affected him, now with wonder, now with anguish and despair. Nor is it to be supposed that, from such symptoms, a mind so acute as Mr. Pratt's remained long in doubt of the presence of his ward. In fact, he recognized his very breathing, the first moment it became audible from emotion, and all along had told his story, and made his remarks under the certainty that Redmond was listening.

Perhaps the reader has already suspected as much, from the seemingly generous kind of self-accusation, and the superfluous humility, rather out of keeping with Mr. Pratt's character, which occasionally insinuated itself into his manner of telling his story; and his concluding sentiments and exhortation may have more particularly suggested the idea.

During the statement, Cushneiche had never once forgotten to appeal by signs for Redmond's acknowledgment of a previous acquaintance with the facts as they occurred. Now, he was the first to move, after Mr. Pratt remained some time silent. Preserving his heavy stride, he walked to the mouth of the retreat, beckoning Redmond to attend him. The unhappy youth, showing by his features and gesticulation, the most lively agony of mind, followed. They walked aside some distance from the den.

"Well, ma-bouchal, did I tell you anything that wasn't the thruth?"

"No, no; your story and your claim are but too true and certain."

"And what man but the man Pratt calls Redmond

Velasquez, could give you the knowledge aforehand, of all that passed between the both, from first to last?"

"I admit it—I admit it fully. Go on."

"And now, is there any notion come into your poor head, of what you're goin' to do?"

"Die, die!" answered Redmond, groaning miserably; "I have nothing to do but die."

"Huth! you're as good as two dead men, yet. Will you be said by me?"

"Say anything you like."

"Take Pratt's advice then."

"How?"

"Make up to the poor colleen you coaxed so long."

"That's a mistake; a mistake very dishonouring to me. I never paid the significant attentions he speaks of: I never wished to pay them, and it is impossible the young lady can have misunderstood me to the extent he says she has."

"Whisht, Redmond; they're soft, wake poor cratures, you know, an' a little o' the smooth tongue, from a likely gorçoon, goes far with them; the colleen thinks you meant to be sweet on her, an' so you bothered her, that's all, whichever way you wanted it to be;—sure there's many a way of killin' a dog besides hangin' him. Look at the matther agin. The ould attorney spakes rason. It's the best coorse."

"Best or worst, it can never be mine. I do not and never will, never can regard the young lady in such a light."

"Not if her heart is broke with your puttin' your *comether** on her, is it? Is that what you say, Redmond a-vich?"

Redmond only shut his eyes, and groaned again.

"It's the best way, I tell you. An' Redmond, none of us can afford to be found out; an' as I said afore, an' all along, never fear me; I'll dhraw far off from you, where you can send me somethin' for the bit and the sup, and where I'll get the priest, an' ax God's pardon for my past life, every day he spares me, from this out, an' never come next or near you; an' Pratt, as he tould you himself, 'ill hould his whisht for his own sake. But come into him again. It's on my mind to throuble him wid another word."

They returned, and Cushneiche, resuming his broken English, again addressed Mr. Pratt:

* Earnest addresses.

"You said in the beginning, you believed you knew who was speaking to you. You said afterwards you believed the speech and the voice were like; now, tell the truth still; who am I that stand before you?"

"From every circumstance, I can conclude you are no other than the man who called himself, when twenty years ago we met, Redmond Velasquez: your apparently intimate knowledge of things, which only he and I could know, is my strongest reason for the presumption."

"Well, then, what have you done with the title-deeds you before refused to give up?"

"They are safe in my house."

"Secured, you think, in an iron box, which is chained and locked to the floor of a closet, inside your bed-room?"

"How do you know that?" abruptly demanded Mr. Pratt, in alarm.

"I will tell the truth, too. I went with a few friends to look for them, before you were brought here this evening; and not finding them in any of your drawers, desks, or lockers, I thought it was likely you might have them in that strong box. But do you know that they are to be got in it now?"

"Villain!" exclaimed Pratt, thrown off his guard, by interpreting this statement and question further than the speaker really had intended—"and you, Redmond Redmond, for I know you listen to me—villains, both, have a care what you do! If these parchments have been robbed out of my house——"

"Your house, I ask you over again?" interrupted Cushneiche, in his own voice.

"Ah!" screamed Pratt—"there! I know you now, at least, and perceive my advantage over you; and by heaven if ——"

"None o' your gab," cried Yellow Sam, poking his pistol at the prisoner's head.

"You dare not injure me, ruffian!" resumed Mr. Pratt—"you dare not take my life!" the prospect of the loss of the title-deeds made him rash and frantic—"or even, were you inclined, there is one among you—Redmond! Redmond, will you see me murdered?"

He tore the bandage off his eyes, and saw, indeed, Redmond and Cushneiche before him, while Yellow Sam was

his only guard, and along with them, the only witness of his important admissions, although he had thought that three or four fellows surrounded him.

"Gi' me the word, captain," said Sam.

"Stop, stop!" exclaimed Redmond, as he sprang forward, and knocked the pistol out of his hand. It went off as it fell, and had scarcely exploded, when another shot seemed to answer it at a distance.

"What the dhoul is that?" asked Cushneiche.

"One o' the cruisers givin' us back our own signal," answered Sam, whose great coat was now thrown by, allowing to be seen his sailor's dress.

"Givin' us a signal, it may be," resumed Cushneiche, "but one of another kind—yes, by the blessed light!—here comes our boys."

Persons were heard running through the retreat, which, so far as Mr. Pratt could now discern, was an arched passage, partially lighted by a rude lamp suspended over the spot where he stood, both extremities gradually fading into darkness; still he was at fault as to where it could be situated.

"Make off! run for your lives!" cried the three or four men who rushed in—"here's the sodgiers from——"

"What side are they comin' from?" briskly, and with an air of courageous self-possession, questioned Cushneiche.

"Sthraight for the ould house," he was answered.

"Did ye hape the stones agin the mouth o' the place?"

"There was no time—they cum hot on us."

"Two o' ye down with the *bresna*, at the other end; then"—lowering his voice as he heard his enemies approaching through the darkened passage—"down with bough and branch—run, or my curse on ye!" they disappeared—"an' here, ye two hoise this good gintleman up, an' folly where Sam 'ill coax ye; aisy, Misther Pratt, an' don't vex men in a hurry—aisy, all, an' mind the work—Redmond, a-vich, stick by me, an' handle this"—giving a pistol.

"Wretched man!" answered Redmond, dashing it to the ground: "do you so soon expect me to train myself to your ways? Begone, and save your miserable life; I stand here, hoping the first bullet may end mine."

"Headsthrong gawk o' the dhoul!" retorted Cushneiche, stamping in one of the fierce and sharp fits that were habitual to him: "do you think betther men than yourself is to

venthre neck an' breath for one that won't stir hand or foot to take his own part? off with you, afther Sam,—off with you, or ma curp on dhoul! I'll——Hell's fire! What's the matther, there below, Yallow Sam?" as the person he addressed, together with Mr. Pratt and his conductors, hastily returned to the spot on which he and Redmond were disputing.

"Boarded, captain," replied Sam; "an' Melay an' Ryan nabbed as they stept from the gang-way."

"How's that? who nabbed 'em?"

"More o' the marines, at this end."

"Are they in yet? quick an' tell me."

"Not yet."

"Then, a bould part—hould silence an' folly me." With his left hand he presented a pistol, and grasped a hanger in the other, and he and his three men faced in the direction whence Sam had just appeared. After a few steps they all became invisible in the gloom. Redmond and Mr. Pratt continued under the lamp, the former with his arms folded, in an attitude of reckless despair; the other anxiously listening. There was a single shot, soon returned by a volley, that roared in echoes through the vault, and a moment after, Cushneiche, Sam, and one of the men, ran back.

"Dhar Dieu! they have it this bout," said Cushneiche, "they war too far in upon us—Bulger is down."

"Down"—added Yellow Sam, "an' dead as cowld lead can make him."

"An' whisht!—here's more o' them, closin' on the other side of us—" continued Cushneiche, as the noise of men and arms sounded at the end of the vault by which Mr. Pratt had entered. Nearly at the same instant, a body of soldiers appeared, the officer at their head crying out—"Surrender, or no quarter." The old robber hastily turned upon the new comers one savage glance of baffled courage and desperation, while his lips, parting from his set teeth, gave such a brindling grin as the bull-dog is noted for, and then hurling his hanger upon the pistol Redmond had cast on the straw beneath their feet, said—"Now, ma-bouchal, you have your will for the two of us—an' I wish you joy of the neck-stock you'll wear the next market-day;" and he stood for the soldiers.

"I will believe you think I am obliged for this timely service, Lieutenant Noble," said Mr. Pratt, extending his

hand to the officer, to whom he was known—"who led you on?"

"A servant or follower of yours, I believe, Mr. Pratt; a long-legged, wavering figure of a fellow, with a face the colour of my coat; and the sheerest coward, notwithstanding, unhanged, this moment."

"You must mean Cotteril—where is he?"

"Where is he?—skulking in some hiding hole of the old ruin abroad; he ran back at the first flash of powder; perhaps the pause in affairs may give him courage to crawl out."

Two shots, in quick succession, interrupted the officer, who faced round, and prepared his men for a new rencounter. Cushneiche listened attentively. Mr. Pratt grew pale. The reverberation of the shots had not died away, when the clashing of a sword, accompanied by a voice which Mr. Pratt recognized as that of his faithful Billy Cotteril, took up the echo.

"Folly after me, sodgiers—never venthre, never win!—little harum is done on me, though the bullets came near enough—an' what's the matther about ten Bill Cottherils, for the sake o' the poor masther—folly afther me, sodgier-boys—we'll gain the day somehow or someway—Chrosh-a-Chreestha!" as he made his appearance flourishing a naked sword round his head—"how did ye come for to get afore me, sodgiers?"

"Who fired the shots, you amusing poltroon?" demanded the officer.

"There was three—maybe more, somehow, but three for sart'n—three desperate *rooluchs** iv 'em—an' they war set upon bein' the death o' poor Bill Cottheril—only we didn't let 'em, somehow or someway:" while he spoke, he pulled off his hat, and holding it up to the light, with a smiling—"ha—faiks it's we have the loock on our side," exhibited two bullet holes in the crown.

"Where did you meet the men that fired at you?" continued Lieutenant Noble.

"Arragh, sir, he fired the shots himself," said Cushneiche; "you'd hear the bawls out of him, for a good mile o' ground, if a gorçoon only show'd him the mouth of a quart bottle:

* Wicked looking fellows.

he 'd lose six inches of his ungainly hoight if a *farh-breeacha** only wagged the *caubeen* at him, in a blast o' wind—see here—" dexterously snatching a pistol from the champion's breast, "it isn't long sence this gave a bark, anyhow;" and the officer, examining the pistol, ascertained, indeed, that it bore the marks of recent explosion.

"A civil, quite, aisy kind iv a life, is a good kind iv a life to lade, masther Cushneiche," said Cotteril, moving off from the robber towards his master.

"Where are we at present, Cotteril?" asked Mr. Pratt.

"I'd be bould to say there was onct a power o' good licqer haped up in this undher-ground place, here, when the Graces lived in their glory," answered Cotteril.

"How did you discover the haunt?"

"Avoch, someway or somehow. There was a boy we know, an' he had the knowledge iv a boy o' the Bulgers; an' the boy we know, spakin' somehow wid Thady Bulger on one thing or another, put in that he could bring him to a body 'ud give him the honest worth for ould watches, or ould silver plates, or ould silver moogs, or things o' the sort; an' a bargain was sthruck; an' Thady went his road for the little matthers: an' there was a body afther him that went along, quite an' aisy, afther a manner he has, an' he seen Thady comin' an' goin'; an' so Bill Cottheril cum to a knowledge, someway or somehow."

"The dhoul mend Bulger, then," whispered Cushneiche to Yellow Sam.

"He airned the worth o' the bullet," assented Sam.

"Let us dispatch our business," said Lieutenant Noble. "Have we a prisoner here, Mr. Pratt?" glancing to where Redmond stood, his arms still folded, and his face and air betokening the dogged indifference he really felt: "have we any prisoner here, after his excellency, Cushneiche, the fellows abroad with the sergeant, and these two others?"

Mr. Pratt was silent; but a glance passed between him and Cotteril, who answered—

"Avoch, captain, sure Masther Redmond, there, must be caged, too; I'll gi' you an honest oath, plump,—an' Bill Cottheril wouldn't hurt his poor sowl for a threasure o' goold——"

* Liar--The scare-crow set up in a corn-field.

"For never a laffina undher a crown piece," interrupted Cushneiche.

"I'll gi' you my oath, plump, that he 's at the head of all that cum acrass us, someway or somehow : I'll swear out. clane, on the green cloth, I seen him, a week agone, cullogin wid Cushneiche on the top o' the first hill, outside o' the house ; and I'll give the honest, civil oath, agin, that they turned off as thick as any gossips, together, an' is livin' together, after a manner ever sence, like—— Sodgiers !" interrupting himself, and making a long stride in among them, as Cushneiche, with a—"Stand out o' the way, you ballour !" seized him by the arm, and twisted him aside.

From all that had lately passed between his master and him, as well as from the signal just given, Mr. Cotteril believed it his business to involve Redmond in as much danger as possible.

"What do *you* say, Mr. Pratt ?" asked the officer. The person he addressed started from a reverie, and then seemed to answer by turning to his ward.

"First, Redmond, let the plunder of the strong-box be given up."

"I know nothing of it," replied Redmond.

"Nor I, either," added Cushneiche ; "that was all a notion o' your own makin'."

"Is it the sthrong-box you 're afeard about, masther ?" asked Cotteril ; "praise be to God, that's safe an' sound, any how : they thried their best to break it open, or lift it, bud they were forced to let it alone, afther a manner ; jist as if a body found a mare's nest, or caught a hoult iv a Tarthar, someway or somehow."

"Are you sure this is true, Cotteril ?" asked Mr. Pratt, advancing close, and speaking in a whisper to his prime minister : "have you seen it safe, after them ?"

"Wid my two rasonable eyes, plase your honour, that 's not used to be makin' mistakes, any how."

"Go on with your charges against him, notwithstanding," continued Mr. Pratt, in a close whisper : "insist—whatever I say—on having him arrested ;" and Mr. Pratt walked away.

Mr. Cotteril, fully taking his cue, turned the tobacco quid in his cheek, gave a preparatory emission, looked virtuously determined, stretched out one leg, and with the point of his

sword (the weapon could not have been in more harmless hands), in lieu of his usual appendage, the switch, began to scrape together the straws and rushes that strewed the floor of the vault.

"Bill Cottheril had always an' ever the karacther to be honest, an' quite, an' aisy ; an' it's a way wid him to have more likin' for honest doins', an' for fair dalins', than for the bit an' the sup ; an' so, masther, I can't be led or said by you : an' when I only do what's right an' honest, little fear, plase God, bud some other 'ill gi' me mate an' dhrink, an' the manes iv honest livin' : an' for the same rason, Captain, afther a manner, you'll saze upon our poor slob, Masther Redmond ; there's a fair oath for id."

"I will make you smart for refusing my earnest request," said Mr. Pratt ; "this is insolent and ungrateful."

"Och, there's no help for id, anyhow or anyway ; we must see right done, whatever comes acrass poor Bill Cottheril."

"Does this determine my course of duty, Mr. Pratt ?" continued the officer.

"You shall judge for yourself, sir," answered Pratt ; "but if I had my will here, it should not be so."

Lieutenant Noble advanced to Redmond.

"I am sorry, Mr. Redmond, for old acquaintance sake, that this becomes my duty."

"Mind your duty, sir, and mind me only as far as your duty concerns me," said Redmond, proudly and savagely.

"Bind the other prisoners, and lodge them in the gaol at ——," resumed the Lieutenant.

"But surely, sir, this youth may accompany you thither without undergoing such an indignity ?" pleaded Mr. Pratt.

"It was my intention that he should, sir."

"I will accept no paltry obligation at one side or the other, good gentlemen," said Redmond ; "I want it not, I despise it ; bind me ;" stretching out his arms.

"The tyin' iv him 'ill make him go more quite an' aisy, afther a manner," exhorted Cotteril.

"Silence, fellow," cried the officer sternly, "or—let me see what my duty permits me to do with you—I will set *you* to guard your little friend, Cushneiche, alone, and leave *him* unbound to give your zeal fair play."

"Why then only do that, sir, in jest or airnest," said Cushneiche with a grim smile, as the soldiers tied his arms

behind his back, "an' whatever happens on the road, by the sowl o' my father, I'll never thry to gi' you the slip—only," fixing a glance on Cotteril, "a body may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb."

"We're too quite an' aisy in oursefs, for a thing o' the sort," demurred Cotteril, skulking into the back-ground.

In a short time all left the retreat, and still in the dark of the February morning, moved for the town of ——. Mr. Pratt now knew that he had been led into the ruins of an old mansion, formerly belonging to a branch of a noble family of the country, whose estate fell to the crown, during the last civil wars. It was not far from the river over which he had at first been borne, and he perceived that the fording of a second stream, and Cushneiche's allusions to the circumstance, were but a *ruse*, in conjunction with their turning and twining, to baffle his calculation of his real situation. In fact, he had twice crossed the same current.

While Cushneiche and his followers were guarded by the soldiers in a body, Redmond was allowed to walk on singly, under the charge of the sergeant and one file. Having gained, ascending from the river-side, the road which led, in one direction, to their place of destination, and, in another, through the village, to Mr. Pratt's house, that gentleman paused and advanced to Redmond.

"I need not say how this affects me, Redmond," he began; "but do not be too much cast down; we must now part—it is absolutely necessary, in order that Ellen's fears may be soothed by my appearance at home; but I will visit you in the course of the day, and, notwithstanding the imprudent obstinacy of this ungrateful scoundrel, Cotteril, see what is to be done; till then, at all events, the committals shall not be made out; the magistrates are my friends; farewell for a while, Redmond."

He extended his hand. Redmond, motioning to his guards, walked on in silence. Mr. Pratt, with a heavy sigh, turned homeward. Cotteril attended the party.

An hour's march brought them before the gaol door, in the main street of the town. Still the morning had not broke, and the street was as silent as the grave, but for the echoing of their own tramp through it. Cotteril and the sergeant knocked loud and long before the gaoler was roused to attend at the barred entrance. With continued zeal, and a few brief

and important words of explanation, Cotteril monopolized the duty of giving the prisoners in charge. The gaoler stared in surprise, when he saw Redmond handed over to his care; and now Cotteril looked more important, and catching the man's eye, as he rubbed all over his chin with the palm of his hand, gave one or two mysterious yet emphatic nods, as much as to say—"all right, I assure you, whatever you may think."

"Gaoler," said Lieutenant Noble, as Redmond passed the grated door—"I will be your authority for any particular attention you can show this poor young gentleman."

"Gaoler," growled Redmond, "let me be treated exactly as my companions are; I am as guilty as they; and whatever they deserve, I deserve."

"It's a thruth he tells you, an' be said by him," observed Cotteril, as he withdrew after the officers and soldiers, and as the gaoler, with a professional twist, shot the first lock on his prisoners.

Until proper apartments could be provided for each, Redmond, Cushneiche, and Yellow Sam were ushered into the gaoler's parlour, and their three companions into another room; and the man went to make his arrangements. Redmond dropped into the first seat he met, and tearing open his coat and vest, as if instinctively to seek a litttle relief for his stuffed bosom, leaned his elbows on a rude table, and hid his face with his hands. Yellow Sam lounged to the recess of the window, and seating himself at his ease, turned sideways to look out at the sentinel, who was pacing up and down before the entrance. Cushneiche stood opposite to Redmond, attentively regarding him.

After a pause, "All's not lost yet, Redmond," he said, "if you folly the biddin' I gave you." The young man remained silent.

Cushneiche continued in an angry and bitter tone—"D'you hear me, man, with your black mop of a head doin' nothin' there, on your two big claws o' hands? Will you rouse yourself, I say, while there's a minute left for the word that's to save or hang us all? Give an ear, I tell you, to the ould attorney an' to me, that has the right to command you, in this purty pickle, at laste, an' you can yet save yourself, an' us that you brought here along with you; if you set him at his best, an' that he has nothin' for it but to take care of him-

self, are you sich an *ownshuck* as to think he'll let us out o' this little cage to go to law with him? Gallows end to the heed the boy takes o' me. Shake yourself, I bid you again!" continued Cushneiche, smartly slapping him on the shoulder. Redmond leaped up.

"Do not touch me!" he cried, "let us die without a touch, as we have lived. And you talk to me of life after this? of an estate, and wealth, and rank, and a marriage? And you suppose—but yes, *you can* suppose it."

"Suppose what?" asked Cushneiche, slowly advancing to Redmond, his brows knitted, and his glance earnestly fixed on the youth's open bosom, "an' this," snatching at the locket, that since his visit to Padhre's old castle hung round Redmond's neck, "this along with it—what am I to suppose about this? In the name o' the blessed saints in heaven, where did you get this, gorçoon? Tell me the thruth, an' tell it in a word, for I hear the gaoler comin', an' there's only a breath left for life an' death, an' for wonders greater than life or death can clear up; spake, I say, where did you get it? It's the second time I axed you about a keepsake, an' the second manes more than the first: let me look closer at it." As he held the locket at the length of the chain, Cushneiche, much agitated, caught up a candle and rivetted his eyes on the trinket. "By the wide world it's the very one! Sam, come here and look at this! Sam rose indifferently from his observations at the window, but when he had gained a glance at the article Cushneiche held out to his inspection, his manner suddenly changed into that of some wonder and interest. "Do you know it?" continued Cushneiche, "did you ever see it afore?"

"Did I ever see anything afore? wasn't it my own hands that tuck it from him?"

"Him!—who?" demanded Redmond, at last rousing himself from the surprise and the struggle of the thousand hopes and conjectures that vaguely and darkly sprung up in his bosom; "what do ye mean? who was its owner? have I any concern with who or what he was?"

"Answer us before we answer you, man!" continued Cushneiche, his impatience increasing; "I hear the step in the passage—blood an' thundher, why don't you say where you got it?"

"Go, when you can, to one of the old castles we passed

this morning by the river-side, and there you will find the man in whose possession I found it."

"Do you mane the man they call Padhre-na-Moulh?"

"Yes; and in the secret place I got this trinket, there were other things that would, perhaps, have more surprised you."

"What things? spake! quick, quick!"

"Pistols, a sea-dirk, a hoard of gold and silver."

"That's himself, Sam!" interrupted Cushneiche, slapping the table; "he's to the fore, yet!"

"An' we thinkin' him well hanged these score years," added Sam, in a tone of wonderment, as the gaoler unlocked the parlour-door.

"Now Masther Cushneiche, an' now Masther Yallow Sam, every convaniency is ready, wid our sarvice to you," said the man, advancing, followed by two sturdy helpers, each of whom held a pair of bolts and handcuffs.

"Wait a moment," said Redmond, "only a moment, good fellow; I have to speak a parting word with these men——"

"Never a moment; an' never a word, Masther Redmond; it's clane against the rule o' the house; and more betoken, them an' you has words enough already, and too many, the neighbours tell me, for your good—so quick wid the mittins an' the spanshels, boys," to the turnkeys, who seemed to require no stimulus in expediting the work they had already taken kindly in hand.

"Say whatever you have to say aloud, Cushneiche," cried Redmond, vehemently—"one word will be a relief to me—am I concerned in this discovery?"

"Boats'n," said Cushneiche, handing something to the gaoler, "you may as well not refuse me a pig's whisper with the poor young gentleman"—and encouraged by the benevolent grin with which the bribe was put up, he shuffled in his bolts to Redmond, and said at his ear—"you'll hear more of it an' me afore there's much danger; I don't value these bits o' spanshells no more than a twist o' straw; nor Sam either; we ever an' always go provided agin them; an' as for the ricketty ould cage itself, a vexed linnet could peck his way out of it—so hould a brave heart, ma-bouchal. When you see Pratt, in the coorse o' the day, jest be said an' led by him, if it was only to throw dust in his eyes, *now*"—laying peculiar emphasis on the last word: "an' so, God speed you! I can say no more till we meet again." He turned away—

"Thankee, boats'n, an' here we go for your other convaniencies." Before Redmond could urge a word, he was locked up, alone, in the parlour.

To prevent, perhaps, disagreeable interruption in another place, it shall here be noticed how far Cushneiche was able to keep some of the promises he had held out to Redmond at parting.

About three o'clock, the same day, the gaoler's wife went out into the garden to cut a few cabbages, as an accompaniment to the piece of corned beef, which for some time had been simmering on the kitchen fire; and all good Irish cooks are aware, that it should have been so simmering for some time before the vegetables were put in to boil along with it. The garden lay outside the high bounding wall of the gaol, enclosed by its own lower walls. A capacious sewer, running under the gaol-yard, and under the foundations of the gaol wall, passed beneath it: but of this the good woman was not aware. Waddling between two rows of her flourishing cabbages, picking her steps through the over moist soil, and having her garments tucked and pinned up to save them from the heavy drops she brushed down at every step, the unsuspecting *gouvernante* had already decapitated two plump heads of "early Dutch," when, fixing her eye upon a third, just at her feet, she thought it moved. Startled, she drew back a little, keeping her glance on the charmed head of cabbage; became convinced it was self-agitated, and grew stupified with fright; but her consternation did not gain a climax until it actually jumped about the trench, and until another head, of a different kind, popped up into its place, and, the mouth sputtering forth clay, opened its keen grey eyes and fixed them upon hers. Without power to utter a cry significant of her alarm, the terrified dame dropped senseless where she stood, her heavy fall and considerable bulk of person doing some injury among the much-prized vegetables around her; and it was only when her husband, growing impatient for his dinner, and finding the beef left boiling away in the pot, came out to look after her, that she recovered in his arms, and could vent her heart in hysteric screams, accompanied by a few incoherent words of explanation. Those few words were sufficient, however, to indicate to the old man-trap keeper the real cause of her fright. Leaving her, with a muttered curse, to take care of herself, he hastened back to his citadel, descended to the dungeon,

in which his own hand had locked up Cushneiche and Yellow Sam, and found it empty ; and pieces of broken plaster, scattered under the lowest part of the low garden wall, afterwards assured him that during his wife's swoon the fugitives had not remained forgetful of the completion of their purpose.

"The little saws an' the files that cut them boults," soliloquised the sad and discomfited gaoler, as he contemplated the articles he spoke of, on the floor of the cell—"war hid in the soles o' the brogues the raps had on 'em ; for we sarched all over their bodies well, not forgetting a peep into the brogues themselves ; and here," he continued, when he returned to the garden wall—"here's the spot where the two ould mast-climbers got over, in no time."

CHAPTER X.

About half an hour after Redmond had been left alone in the parlour, the proprietor returned to conduct him to his more regular quarters. Whether influenced by Lieutenant Noble's request, or by his own feelings, the man did not doom his young prisoner to such a cell as had been allotted to Cushneiche and Yellow Sam. He introduced him, in fact, into the debtors' region of the prison, and with much self-flattering eulogy of the comforts and respectability of the place, locked up Redmond in a low arched apartment, eight or nine feet square, and having a rough deal table and a ricketty chair for its only furniture.

Again the young man flung himself into a chair by the table, and hid his face on his hands. It cannot be said that he thought ; the confusion of his mind did not allow of a process meriting the name ; still all the poignant, and, indeed, wonderful views his situation presented, came in succession before him. It had been proved that he was the son of a mean and disgraced person, and all his hopes of life—life itself, were henceforth annihilated. They spoke to him of wealth to be obtained by accommodating himself to circum-

stances, and by a prudent plan of concealment; he trampled on that prospect. He would not accept existence on such terms. He would seek death in every shape, far away from Ireland, if, indeed, the present charges against him were not preferred to the death; and of this, although he could not pause to balance the reason why, he felt doubtful. Everything was lost to him; Rosalie, too—and at this thought it will not seem surprising if, at his age, he suffered to escape him the sorest groan his reverse had called forth.

What was the nature of the vague promises Cushneiche had held out to him at parting?—what caused him to hold them out? what meant the robber's agitation at the sight of the locket? That was the real question. Had the trinket called up occurrences in which he was personally concerned? or—and Redmond here brought to mind the comment of Yellow Sam upon the supposed fate of its original owner—had it merely reminded the freebooters of a comrade whom they had thought dead, and dead in shame and infamy? Redmond started at the sudden association his disarranged mind had not before perfectly made—Peter of the Castle was that former comrade. The hidden hoard, the weapons, confirmed this notion, even if Cushneiche's assertion could be doubted. And the mystery of Padhre's long life of seclusion and penance was now explained; he had been overtaken by remorse in the midst of his sinful career, imposed on himself a life of penitential expiation, and had withdrawn from the world, under a changed name, to make his peace with God. But how did all this concern Redmond? For the hundredth time he held up the locket, and pored over the initials A. P., which were set in pearl and brilliants upon one side of it; they suggested no name of which he had ever heard; they could not relate to him; they indicated, perhaps, the name of some female to whom the hermit-robber had been attached in his youth; he let the trinket drop out of his hand with indifference. Yet Padhre's uniform interest in him again occurred to tantalize Redmond's mind; their last interview, too, and the other appointed interview, for which the day was now near at hand; he wished he could once more see Padhre; he wished he could keep that appointment; he would inform him of the proof of his parentage, so lately confirmed; perhaps the step might lead to something, he knew not what; and Redmond groaned, and his brow flamed, as he

ended in the conjecture that Padhre's interest had only grown out of his having recognised him to be the son of the wretched man who now claimed him—the solitary's former partner in crime.

This started another supposed case: Padhre had early learned from Cushneiche himself the secret of Redmond's connexion with Pratt; and, to avoid exposure of the character of his miserable parent, and, indeed, of all the strange circumstances Pratt had confessed, the hermit advised his union with Pratt's daughter. "Poor Ellen," sighed Redmond, as, for the first time, his mind calmly contemplated her in the view in which Padhre's assurances, and, afterwards, her father's own story, had placed her. Did she really love him, as was said? Love him to the injury of her happiness and life? And must he blame his own attentions for her feelings? His heart softened a little. Rosalie was lost for ever; he could not love Ellen as he loved Rosalie, or as Ellen loved him; but, every other motive and consideration apart, did not honour and humanity call on him to ——. No, no! he would not disgrace her, even to make her momentarily happy. Were his name and descent honourable, he might, after a time, passively sacrifice his life to save or cheer hers; but she would not continue to love the son of an outlaw; and he particularly shrank from the subject, when he considered the alliance as one of prudence on his part; as one that would ensure to him, without further exposure, the wealth his bandit-father had amassed, and of which, come what might, he determined never to share as much as would give him an hour's sustenance.

His prison-door was unlocked, and Mr. Fenelly, the old Roman Catholic clergyman, approached him. Redmond felt offended at an intrusion he thought could only have been prompted by mere idle curiosity; in a sullen mood, he arose, and after a slight bow, walked to the window.

"You think I have no right to visit you, my good young man," began the priest; "but I think I have. You know I am intimately acquainted with a lady you are interested about."

Redmond turned abruptly and looked at his questioner.

"I mean Miss D'Arnell, sir; you are aware that, being of my persuasion, and I being an old man, our friendship is

particular. Well, I come to speak a word to you from Miss D'Arnell."

Redmond started to the only chair in the apartment, and placed it near the priest.

"You threw yourself in her way last night, as she was riding home," continued Mr. Fenelly, "and shocked her much with the confirmation from your own lips of a shocking story; and you added some allusions, and some account of your feelings and actions, to which she could not reply at the time. But now she sends by me a return to the long farewell you made her, and is anxious to have me say, that, although you and she can never meet again, she shall be deeply afflicted, as a former friend, to hear any accounts of your conduct in the present trying circumstances, which may appear unworthy of the mind and heart you inherited from the Giver of all good, and improved under liberal habits of education."

"I am thankful to the lady, sir, for the compliment and for the good advice, and also for the doubt the good advice involves."

"Make your own comments. But now, perhaps, you will kindly allow me to express my own sincere regrets for your sufferings, and a few of my own views in your regard:—pray hear me out. In this second instance, I am not so very officious as you may think, either. However strange it may sound, I am rather intimately concerned in all that concerns you. I can influence your fate. Do not stare at me, young man, in doubt or wonder; I speak the words of truth; and, if you live, you shall witness that I do."

"Go on, sir. How can all this be? You owe me an explanation, and in justice, honour, mercy, will give it at a word."

"Justice, honour, mercy, supply the precise reasons why I must not. Again I request you not to be impatient with an old man that really means you well, and deals in no juggling talk or tricks. Indeed, it was no part of my duty to have said even so much to you before; and so much you would never have heard from me, but for your present unexpected situation. But believe me still in what I say. I have a great deal to do with you; and from a full knowledge of your prospects, I have a right to advise any step I may think for the best. Therefore, attend to me. You have won the affections of a most amiable young person; her happiness is in your

hands. Her father, I can learn, is not averse to the idea of your making her your wife ; your honour whispers that you should ; your interests, your safety command it. I, who am a judge of your interests, feel convinced you should not hesitate ; and, in fact, a greater question than any stated, than any you are yet aware of, a question connected with the lives and the good name of others—hangs upon your decision. Farewell."

The clergyman had moved to the door as he spoke the last words. "Think me no juggler, I repeat, and do not hastily reject my advice." He withdrew.

Redmond stood overwhelmed with surprise. Here was a new actor in the embarrassed scene he could not have dreamt of. Here was another individual linked with his fate—if, indeed, the priest's solemn assertions were true—between whom and himself no kind of connection had seemed possible. And here was this new-found friend recommending, along with all former ones, a certain measure. He appeared to dream. His real existence appeared to have changed into something imaginary. These were not the every-day chances of life ; perplexing mystery surrounded him. But a recollection of one part of the priest's discourse aroused him to a bitter sense of reality. It was the message from Miss D'Arnell. Well ! they were separated for ever ; and the lady lost no time in confirming the fact. His proud nature boiled high. Forgetting all the good reasons that, at another time, he would have allowed, nay, that he had himself submitted to her for her resolution, he could only feel he had been slightly treated ; and he would show less of disappointment than, perhaps, was reckoned on ;—and here Ellen again strongly occurred, but merely as a medium of revenge upon Rosalie.

Before he could farther proceed with his perplexed reveries, the door again opened, and Mr. Pratt came into the room, looking sad and careworn. Redmond's notice of him was strange ; he did not know in what manner to return his salute.

"I have staid away too long, Redmond," the gentleman began (it was past three o'clock in the afternoon), "but I could not help it. Ellen was to have been quieted, the magistrates spoken with regarding the committals ; and, above all, that intemperate and ungrateful fellow, Cotteril,

brought to task. But I am sorry to inform you, I seem to possess little influence over him in this serious matter. He persists in his determination to prosecute."

"Well, be it so."

"God forbid we should dismiss the subject so indifferently. God forbid I, at least, was so unnatural as to do so. For, Redmond, apart from my sincere and unchanged good-will to you, a father's feelings give me an interest, an absorbing interest in it. Should any real evil happen to you, my child—I must speak out, Redmond, though it appear indelicate—my beloved child would not survive the blow."

"I do not understand you, sir."

"Redmond, I am forced to be explicit. This moment, though she knows nothing of your present perilous situation, Ellen's fears on account of your absence are sinking her into the grave. The love, the infatuation with which you have inspired her, could not remain hidden from a parent's eyes. And you know her tender constitution, you know——"

"Mr. Pratt, do not utterly distress me. I was, until your astonishing assertions, quite ignorant of the great honour Ellen did me. I do not require to be now appealed to on the subject; its bare mention by you is sufficient for every purpose."

"Well, then, Redmond, hear what I have to say. Although Cotteril is obstinate, and although it will cost me a great and peculiar effort and sacrifice to turn him from his course, yet, give me a competent motive and I will venture far to do it. I cannot now explain the nature of the important steps that will here be necessary; another time you shall know of them; enough for me that I feel them to be important, and not to be taken except as a last resource; and enough for you that I repeat, supply me with the natural motive, and they shall be taken."

"Allow me to be as explicit as you are, Mr. Pratt. Supposing me to estimate as I ought—as any man ought—the honour your most amiable child confers on me, can I, consistent with manliness or fair dealing, ask her to share the darkened lot that, no matter how long I live, must be mine?"

"She would share any lot with you, any that awaits you; although, unless you provoke it by your own obstinancy, Redmond, I see none she can consider questionable."

"Does that intimate, sir, that Ellen may become my wife

unaware of the disgrace of the recent discovery to which you are a witness?"

"No; she is fully aware of the discovery you mean, only Ellen thinks it no disgrace to you." This was assertion merely; Mr. Pratt had kept his daughter ignorant of all connected with Redmond, from the moment he left the house.

"On the contrary, Redmond, she thinks, and truly thinks, that, passing by your unhappy father, I should be more disgraced by a public exposure of the details of the whole matter, than you can be. But there, for all our sakes, is the thing to be avoided. Look closer at the facts. If your father is prosecuted by your side, he will, in revenge or self-defence, expose the connexion between you and him, while making his accusations against me."

"My God, my God!" groaned Redmond.

"Although such accusations cannot save him—save his life—Redmond, nor, alas——"

"My life. Speak on, without considering that."

"Nor hers who——"

"It does not require argument, I repeat, sir."

"But, although indifferent to your own fate, and leaving Ellen's out of the question, surely, Redmond, the simple duty of snatching from a shameful end your own father——" continued Mr. Pratt, fully aware of the efficacy of pressing this point as often and as home as possible, "surely this alone will arouse you to some exertion."

"Mr. Pratt," demanded Redmond, abruptly, indulging an abrupt thought, "can you imagine what motive sent the old priest, Mr. Fenelly, to me this morning?"

"He visited you this morning, then?" in a surprised tone; although the speaker was far from being surprised, inasmuch as the visit spoken of had arisen out of a conversation between him and Mr. Fenelly, early that morning, when the clergyman called on Mr. Pratt to be informed of the cause of Redmond's incarceration, about which he felt greatly surprised and interested; and Mr. Pratt had absolutely urged him to undertake the last topic we have heard him press on the youth's notice.

Redmond satisfied Mr. Pratt's question; and when with much solemnity that gentleman assured him he could not guess the priest's motive, the young man continued—

"Do not think, sir, from my changing the subject, that I

am indifferent to the fate of even such a parent as it has been the will of Heaven to give me. If I have not alluded to his situation, it was because I dreaded to do so, not because I forgot it."

"Take him out of it, then, Redmond; snatch him from a fate that must expose and destroy us all—free the wretched man of the irons that, while we speak, fetter him." We again interrupt Mr. Pratt to say that Cushneiche and Yellow Sam had escaped before he came to the gaol; that he had heard as much; but that the persons around Redmond had received his strict injunctions not to inform the youth of the fact. "Come, Redmond, rise up, and come with me, and all will be well; why can you hesitate a moment to be led by one whose happiness and honour are bound up in yours? Alas! why did you ever hesitate to do so? There began all our present troubles. You have not, you never had, Redmond, a cause to feel distrustful of me. If I suppressed the facts of your real parentage, what but a feeling for your future peace and respectability prompted me? Now that, at your own seeking, you know them, were it not better they had remained unknown? And look at my whole conduct towards you; look at my care of you in school and college. Redmond, I do not attempt to deny that my penury, at the time I became only the agent to your great estate, suggested griping and dishonest thoughts; for the toiling and needy, wealth has sore temptations; and no doubt, so far as your unhappy parent was concerned, I sinfully indulged hopes and calculations unworthy of a Christian; but human nature is weak, Redmond. Perhaps, with my strong suspicions of the character of that man, and with the voice of the law and of justice rising up on my side against him, some extenuation may be allowed to my conduct; leaving it quite inexcusable, however, how has a single act or view of my life, for twenty years, injured *you*, Redmond? I educated you as a gentleman. I treated you as one. From the hour my child was born, I destined you to possess every acre of the property; when you left the house, I had not given up my intention; it forms, at this moment, the great wish of my heart; come home with me, Redmond—come to your own home—possess it, and enjoy it—assume the rank and character your considerable means ensure to you; we can so arrange, that the connection between you and the prisoner in this dungeon, under us, shall

never be known ;—he is not disposed, I am sure, to aggrieve you ;—if his life be now saved, he will surely consent to live far away from Ireland, on your bounty."

Redmond brought to mind, indeed, that Cushneiche had more than once proposed these very terms.—"The rumour that, above all others, makes you my nephew, may remain uncontradicted for ever ; and here, on your own estate——"

"Mr. Pratt," interrupted Redmond, "to part of your plan my mind is irrevocably averse. If, indeed, I am honoured, so far as you say, by the good opinion of your excellent daughter, she and I shall never remain here to expose ourselves even to the chance of disgrace. Some other country must be our future home. And further, the wealth you speak of as mine, I shall never accept ; enough that the blood of a common bandit runs in my veins ; I shall never live and fatten upon his plunder ;—oh, God ! perhaps upon the product of orphans' and widows' tears, and the blood of my fellow-creatures. No, sir ; I am young, and the world is open to me, as it has been to other men. I will go home with you on these terms, and on no other."

"Well ; come home, with any exceptions to the future that your present distressed feelings naturally take, dear Redmond. I cannot wonder to hear you utter some little vehemence and extravagance ; pardon me, and do not interrupt me : reflection and time may cause material changes of opinion. Give me your hand, and let me congratulate you on a new and closer tie betwixt us, and at the same moment, on your liberation from this place. If I solemnly pledge myself as security for your immediate removal, the people here will at once let you come, until I can take my last measures with Cotteril, and again see the magistrates. Let us hasten home, and conclude our private arrangements this very evening. Marriage articles will take little time to prepare, and less in the signing. Come, my carriage is outside. To-morrow morning we shall come back together, and free the other prisoners."

He knocked at the door of the apartment. The gaoler appeared. He declared himself responsible, as he had said he would do, for taking Redmond away ; and in a few minutes they were seated together in Mr. Pratt's carriage, and driven rapidly out of the town.

"Well," thought Redmond, "my course is begun, wherever it may lead : my fate known for the present, however it may

become fixed; and shattered and darkened as is my mind, one little ray of gratification breaks in with the hope that even by sacrificing myself, unknown to her, I may promote the happiness of one of the gentlest of God's creatures. It will, indeed, be but a gloomy relief; for my own heart there is no hope of fire-side joy. It must brood over the past till it stupifies or breaks."

Mr. Pratt had his reverie, too. "No wiser saying than that which teaches a man to be watchful of circumstances and to accommodate himself to them. If the torrent cannot be crossed in a bold straight line, some little swimming with its stream may land one safely at the opposite side. Assuredly, the greater part of wisdom is coolness when others are hot; in fact, fools make sages. Yet, in my present success, caution and temporising alone have not won the battle. I have been powerfully assisted by chance—say my usual good fortune; and in a way, too, that while I took my advantage of it, I did not, then, and cannot yet understand. But no matter about that mystery now; a time will come for unravelling it at leisure."

The time was nearer at hand than he thought.

Little conversation ensued between the gentlemen on the road homeward. Mr. Pratt's remarks were confined to anticipations of the joy and relief their safe return would give Ellen. They gained that point of the road approaching the hill, which led down to the village, and which commanded to their right hand, and under them, a view of the banks of the river, and the group of old castles. At sight of the ruins, from the carriage window, Redmond bethought of his late wish to have a last interview with Padhre; and now, even supposing him not to meet the solitary at home, he determined —if for no other purpose than to replace the locket—upon leaving the carriage awhile, and walking down the descent to the water. When he signified his intention, Mr. Pratt looked surprised, if not suspicious of, perhaps, an attempt to escape, and desired to know Redmond's business with Padhre. His companion gave some slight reason, but would not be denied; Mr. Pratt could keep him in view and wait in the carriage for him, he said; and he got out and bent his way down to the river side.

Approaching the ruins, he saw Padhre's two old attendants hobbling, at a considerable distance, along the water's edge:

Padhre himself was not with them or before them, but he might have walked out of view. Redmond gained his castle, and his cell-door. The bundle of hay filled the outer archway; he pushed it in, entered, and Padhre's wailing "oh—h, oh—h," sounded in his ear.

Looking round, he saw him stretched upon his humble couch, appearing, from the listless way he lay, and from the unusual paleness of his cheek and brow, to be exhausted with sickness. His voice, too, as he gave his complaining challenge, sounded feeble and hoarse.

"I have returned to see you, Padhre," Redmond began, sitting on the deal box, "before the time you named, because I thought you'd be glad to hear I was going to do your bidding at last." Padhre ceased his cry, as if attentively listening. "Yes, Padhre, I have lost for ever her whose smile was the only one that can ever cheer my young life, and I am about to unite myself to another woman, who, although worthy of any man's love, I can never love, and whose soft and unsuspecting affection for me, must, till I die, and God send that may be soon, only bring endless tears from my eyes and heart."

Redmond's own voice now faltered; Padhre held up his hands, as if to bless and thank his protegé, and afterwards made signs to the effect that his sad forebodings were imaginary, and that all happiness would attend his choice. "No, no, good friend; and if ever you had felt a true love, you could not think it," continued Redmond; "if ever you had felt the promise made, morning and night, to your heart in a younger day, that only one other heart alone could bring it joy and contentment, that only one eye could bless it with a smile, and only one hand confer a pledge worth the taking—and, oh, Padhre? if, after this, you had ever seen that heart darkened to you, that eye clouded, that hand drawn back and kept for another, you would feel with me how hopeless a thing it is, in the first hopefulness of youth, to——" Tears, the vent of his blacker feelings of the previous night, stopped Redmond, and he could perceive that the poor listener wept too, turning on his couch to hide a bitter agitation; and as the young man recollected the little locket and the tress of shining black hair, his heart smote him with the notion of his having placed before Padhre, in his suppositious case, a true picture of the wretch's former experience and feelings.

"And I came to tell you another story, Padhre," continued Redmond, after a short pause; "you know I have been bred up without a father, or the knowledge of one; but I came to tell you I have at last found out my father."

The hermit, forgetting the physical depression that had evidently weighed him down, started up on his elbow, and looked wildly at Redmond.

"Yes, old friend; last night my father's claim to me was proved; and a robber is that father."

"They lie that brought you the story!" exclaimed Padhre, in a tone so deep and loud that the old ruin echoed to it: and as he spoke, apparently shaking off the sickness of his body, he sprang to his feet with such a stern energy, and showed a bearing so lofty and grand, that, recollecting the long silence of his life, and the former quietness and humility of his air, Redmond was also startled to his feet.

"Who blinded you with that fable, boy?" continued Padhre, as they confronted each other. "Answer me, in a word, that I may confound them! I break an awful vow for this;" he went on, dropping on his knees; "but, oh! good and merciful God! thou witnesseth how suddenly it has taken me, and how great is the temptation to loose my tongue at last in a communion with my fellow-creatures! No presumption, no thought of worthiness, no forgetfulness of my sin prompts the disobedience—the hope to do good—to right the wronged—to speak the truth, that innocence may be shielded, and the enemies of truth defeated; this alone is my motive!" he bent his head on his breast. Redmond looked and listened in consternation, not wholly unmixed with joyful hope. Although the hermit's tones were loud and intense, his pronunciation was thickened and imperfect, as if a long disuse of the powers and mechanism of the tongue had impaired its facility. Redmond thought it was as if a dead man had been restored to speech, and with his clayey and frozen lips suddenly and lamely attempted the language of a former existence. These fancies confused him. The vehement denial of the story of his parentage supplied the relief to his feelings.

Padhre's mental prayers were ended, and he arose, less agitated, and resumed:—

"Do not stand silent, young man, when at last you ought to speak to the purpose. Who imposed the story on you?"

"My guardian, and the man who called himself my father."

"Pratt? what could have been his reason?" (musing) "no matter; a bad one, whatever it was; and one that deprives him, perhaps, of the chance he hitherto had of an alliance with you. And who is the man that acted with him?"

"They certainly did not act together; on the contrary, it was by violence, and to save his life, that Pratt confirmed in my hearing all the facts the other had previously told me."

"Let it be so—but tell me who is that other."

"The robber, Cushneiche; you must have heard of him, and seen him."

Padhre appeared astonished to the utmost as he said—"Yes—I have heard of him, but we never met—where is he now? can you inform me?"

"He has spent much of his early life at sea, I understand," said Redmond, first making a remark suggested by sudden associations, and waiting to note its effect.

"Ay, say you so?" in increased interest; "how old is this man? what is his height? what his style of features?"

Redmond gave an accurate description. Padhre listened anxiously.

"Then where can he be found, I say?"

"In the gaol of ——, whence I have this moment escaped, only on conditions of entering into the alliance with Pratt, to which you just alluded."

"Leave me," continued Padhre, after another moment of reflection. "I will see this man in his dungeon, and he shall recant the falsehoods he has told you; and if, by this means, Pratt now wishes to compel you into the measure your declarations and your youthful tears of this evening convince me you dislike, he shall stand before Pratt, in a few hours, to disclaim any such agency; he or I can send another. Farewell. I am ill and weak," he continued, placing one hand on his forehead, and the other on his heart. "Since we last met I have been sorely visited with, I hope, the final warning, but heaven will allow me breath and strength for this, and you may rely on my endeavours."

"Sir," said Redmond, unconsciously using the term of respect and awe with which he now began to regard his companion; "this very evening I have agreed to sign the articles of marriage."

"And do I not promise you help this very evening?"

"Am I then to understand that I must not sign until that help comes?"

A noise as of one entering the castle was heard, and Mr. Pratt's voice called on Redmond.

"Farewell, I say—he comes to summon you; and, as you value your interest, do not stay here to let him hear us speaking together—away, and meet him on the stairs; but," he added, in a low whisper, "do nothing in a hurry, now."

Redmond bounded along the dangerous shelf, that, forming almost two sides of a square, led from Peter's recess to the point communicating with the stairs. Answering with earnest apologies Mr. Pratt's remonstrances for delay, both hurried out of the ruin, gained the carriage, and, soon after, Mr. Pratt's house.

"I must leave you alone, here, Redmond," said Mr. Pratt, when they entered a room, "for a little time. First, I have to see Cotteril, and use with him the last argument for your safety, of the nature of which I may as well now acquaint you. Although from some cause I cannot exactly define, but, perhaps, from your darkness to him, he dislikes you, Redmond, yet Cotteril is alive to my interests, and, above all, adores his young lady. I will tell him, then, waiving all nice feelings, that her happiness, perhaps her life, depends on yours; and *that*, I know, will at once influence him."

"'Tis, indeed, a disagreeable and shocking resource, sir, considering the connection between master and servant, and that a lady's secret is concerned."

"Did I not say it was? Do you not recollect my first words on the subject? But however repulsive, the thing must be done. And next, Redmond, you will have to wait until I inform Ellen of your intentions with respect to her. I suppose you think it as well that I should be your advocate?"

"Certainly, Mr. Pratt," answered Redmond, eagerly catching at a proposal that seemed calculated to save, in a degree, his present peculiar feelings.

"Perhaps it would even be for the best, if, saying in your name all the little matters usual on such occasions, I did away with the necessity of a formal explanation between you and her?"

Redmond again warmly assented. Mr. Pratt would say

what *he* wished; and by laying an emphasis as he spoke, Redmond thought to extenuate to his own sense of honour and delicacy, the disingenuousness he felt himself forced to commit.

"Well then, Redmond, another word. If I come to lead you by the hand to Ellen, you will understand that she admits your suit; and, when ye meet, you will promise me to spare her the most remote allusion to any recent occurrences, of which the discussion might be too strong for her feelings."

Redmond once more agreed, and Mr. Pratt left him to prepare Ellen, in his own way, for the coming scene.

He found her in her chamber, touching a little harp, as she sang a mournful song, for the words of which he stopped at her door to listen.

"Oh! when I pause, and think upon
My own green hills and pleasant river
Where I have blithely roving gone,
To shoot at will my fancy's quiver—
The hope of childhood in my breast,
Free of the chain that since has bound me,
The broad sun sinking in the west,
Air, earth, and water laughing round me:

"When in the silence of the night,
Such recollections swell my sorrow,
I start and loath the coming light
That brings with it no happy morrow;
I wept not that my hopes should flee,
Forgetful of their fond beguiling,
But now I weep that health should be
As fickle as their foolish smiling!"

With a sigh that was speedily followed by a smile, her father entered before the last cadence of the song was finished. She smiled in return at his approach, but in such sort as sent no joy to his heart.

"My pretty coquet," he began, sitting by her side—"do you remember a promise I made you?"

Ellen started, blushed, trembled; but answered "No!"

"What!—nothing of a pledge to place a certain person at your feet, within a given time?—and now, suppose the time should even be anticipated?"

And in this strain Mr. Pratt continued, until, according to

his plans, he had prepared Ellen to meet Redmond in an hour : and then he went to complete other arrangements.

When the person of whom he spoke, sat down in the apartment where his guardian had left him, he bent his mind to consider all the views of his extraordinary situation. But, more than on any former occasion, he was incapacitated for sober thought. Every recurrence to Padhre's promise to belie Cushneiche's and Pratt's story, sent a rush of joy about his heart that bewildered him ; and every recurrence to his engagement with Ellen made him flame with impatience, and, on account of his still countenancing while he hoped to evade it, with shame and some self-contempt. In the hope of being rescued from the infamy of a near alliance with a wretch, visions of Rosalie again flitted over his mind, and tempted him into an ecstacy ;—a recollection that to realize these visions he must now, no matter on what account, falsify declarations he had permitted Pratt to make to Ellen, made him wring his hands in despair. More than once he started up, to call out to Mr. Pratt, and interrupt the interview between him and his gentle daughter, which, each moment, was involving him deeper ; but a certain misgiving curbed him. After all, could he—ought he—to place implicit reliance on Padhre's vehement contradictions and incoherent promises?—What warrant had he that they were not of a piece with the occasional insanity attributed to the solitary, and of which some former intercourse between them had seemed to supply certain proof?—At last Redmond came to a determination. He would avoid, as long as possible, any act that could positively commit him to a future course ; in fact, he would reckon, as long as possible, on the interference that had been vaguely promised ; but if it did not appear at the time within which, every thing considered, it ought naturally to appear, Redmond made up his mind to take Padhre's inconsistency as a demonstration of his madness, and he would then no longer hesitate to save poor Ellen's feelings, and, indeed, his own sense of honour, from a chance of the discovery that she was indifferent to him. If he could not contrive to keep out of her presence, he resolved not to face her with a falsehood even upon his brow, or in his manner ; if once they met, he would bind himself to her for ever.

The evening drew on; the room in which he sat deepened in shadow, and while Mr. Pratt still stayed away,

the hours and moments he had allowed himself for a decision expired. At last it grew so late that he gave up all hope, and at the same time, embraced his conditional alternative; and just as his mind came to a point, his guardian entered the apartment.

Advancing slowly to Redmond, he held out his hand in silence, and led him up stairs. Upon the way, Mr. Pratt pressed his ward's hand, but did not feel a return. They entered the spacious and old-fashioned drawing-room. It seemed to have been hastily and imperfectly lighted. Upon a table, at the remote end, there was a single lamp, sufficient, however, to show to Redmond's view a folded parchment. Cotteril stood simpering by the table. In a window-recess, to the right-hand side, Ellen was seated.

In continued silence, Mr. Pratt led Redmond almost the whole length of the room to salute her. She tried to stand up as they came near, but was obliged to drop in her chair again, trembling and weeping. Without uttering a word, Redmond, not uninterested by her joyful distress, her obvious devotion to him, her weakness and her beauty, sat by her side, took her hands in his, and pressed them tenderly to his lips.

Mr. Pratt had walked to the table, and standing sideways to the young pair, had taken up the parchment and employed himself in reading it. Cotteril, grinning and whispering, peered at it over his shoulder. In a few minutes Redmond heard his name softly pronounced by Mr. Pratt. He arose from his silent interview with Ellen, and repaired also to the table.

"Read it, dear Redmond," whispered his guardian, presenting the instrument, "and first see if you approve it; then you can sign at once; Cotteril will witness."

"I am sure there is no need, sir," replied Redmond, smiling a ghastly smile,—"it must be all perfectly correct; I will sign at once, if you please."

Ducking and grinning, Cotteril began to mend a pen. Mr. Pratt turned towards the end of the apartment near the door; and—"Aye," he thought, "no matter for the explanation of the robber's motive; no matter yet awhile; whatever tempted him to fabricate the story of his connexion with this boy, it has served the purpose; the dread of exposure as the son of such a man, compels Redmond to

make Ellen his wife; and I want no more at present to set my heart at ease about the future. What is the matter below?" interruping his reverie, and speaking aloud, as he walked to the door. Redmond had taken the pen. He started, and laid it down.

A servant ran up stairs in such speed, that he and his master came in contact at the open door, and the man, glancing behind him, and looking agitated, passed Mr. Pratt into the middle of the drawing-room.

"Man, what is the matter, I ask?" continued Mr. Pratt.

"There is a stranger below, sir," answered the man, in a whisper.

"Well?—if it is not Cushneiche again, why should a stranger cause this bustle? Show him into the dining-room, and say I am engaged, but will see him in a few minutes."

"His appearance is so uncommon, sir—and he takes no notice of us—but has walked into all the rooms below, as if searching for you—and he will answer no questions, sir, and speak no word to us; listen, sir! he walks up stairs."

"That step is not assumed—that is *his* foot, indeed!" muttered Pratt, as he drew backward from the door. Redmond heard a heavy and measured tread coming up to the drawing room; and presently a tall and gaunt man, habited in a foreign dress, paced one pace into the apartment. His face, indistinct to Redmond through the shadow which wrapt the far end of the room, was very pale; he wore mustaches; and, without frowning, his black eyes fell on Pratt. After entering, he stopped, and remained motionless as a statue. Redmond thrilled as he gazed at the silent visitor. If the dead could, after a long absence from earth, re-appear in fleshy mould and wonted costume, the figure might suggest supernatural terrors. There was no sympathy in his eye with life, or with the living. His features were fixed in the rest, as well as in the hue of the grave; his very dress seemed colourless and blurred, as if with the dust and the decay of ages. Some such doubts of the nature of his guest appeared to assail Mr. Pratt: for, as his distended eyes returned the stare fastened upon them, he stooped low, pressing his clasped hands between his knees, and the broken

breathing that denotes an inward shudder, was, in the deep silence, heard to escape him. The stranger beckoned him forward. He shrunk farther off. The mute command was repeated again and again, and he at last obeyed it. The stranger stept back through the door, and resumed his signals. Pratt, cringing into himself, and yet, as if drawn by irresistible force, while his eyes still dwelt on the pale face of his summoner, gradually followed.

"Go not out with him, father!" screamed Ellen, and fell; but at that instant Pratt had crossed the threshold, and the door closed on him and his visitor.

Redmond sprang to support the senseless girl; Cotteril had run to hide himself in the deep recess of a window. As he held her in his arms, the measured tread of the stranger sounded up the staircase leading to the sleeping apartments; then Redmond heard it, overhead, in Mr. Pratt's bedchamber; then fainter, in the inner closet; and then it rested. After some time, Mr. Pratt re-entered the drawing-room, alone, holding some legal deeds in his hand; advanced with a tottering step to Redmond; put his left arm round Ellen; with the right held out the parchments to his ward; and when Redmond had taken them, waved his disengaged hand to him, as he said—"Leave my daughter to my own care, and to the only protection she can now expect; these are the documents that make you lord and master of this house. We shall ask the shelter of its roof from you only until she is able to make a journey."

After he had spoken, the stranger's foot went from the door, where it would seem he had been listening, and then down stairs, and out of the house.

CHAPTER XI.

It is now necessary to explain what led to the closing incidents of the last chapter; and for this purpose we must go back a little.

After Miss D'Arnell's rencounter with Redmond, on her road home from Kitty Tobin's wedding, and after the message

sent to him by Mr. Fenelly, we trespass so far on the young lady's private and reserved feelings as to intimate that she did not experience much peace of mind. True, until the moment he was bidding her an eternal farewell, Redmond had never declared his passion, and she had never been called on to institute an exact inquiry into the state of her heart towards him. But they had been for a whole year very good friends, together; reading the same books, discussing the same subjects, taking the same walks and rides; and, when their eyes met, which was often, seeing each other's opinions and feelings responded to a nicety in every glance. And if, along with all this, it be considered that Rosalie D'Arnell was doomed, under the roof of her sad and melancholy protector, to almost total exclusion from the world, and that Redmond was at once the only young man she saw, and the only cheerer of her solitude, the natural presumption will appear to be that the old and never-ending result must have gradually been taking place between them. When, therefore, it became necessary, in consequence of the shocking disclosures regarding him, that she should give up Redmond's society for ever, Rosalie felt nothing less, however she might try to disguise it to her own breast, than the pangs of disappointed affection; while the circumstances of the case added unusual poignancy to her sufferings.

But the young lady's pride and spirit helped her to wage constant war against her softer impressions. That her high aristocratic blood should ever have throbbed in unison with the degraded stream which, it was now proved, ran through Redmond's veins, was a reflection almost always sufficient to make her ashamed of any gentle sentiments in his regard, and to leave, in her opinion, lofty compassion as her sole present feeling towards him. She had, too, a duty to perform, which assisted her efforts to forget. The Count O'Ruark, her unhappy guardian, required and merited from her all the attentions and all the little cheering tributes of love and gratitude which a heart sincerely feeling both could bestow. The gloom, the bitterness, and the depression which, since they had met, formed his character, now began more than ever to predominate. His health grew worse, and the weakened and shrinking body allowed full tyranny to the mind. He remained locked up in his chamber oftener and longer than usual, although, for years, solitary habits had been confirmed to him;

and his groans, his sighs, and his tears, that ever had a reference to the past, were more frequent to Rosalie's ear, as she stole to his door to listen; or to her eye, upon the few occasions when he would yield to her gentle tap, her entreaties, or her light song, and allow her a moment's opportunity to sit by his side and console him.

After her last meeting with Redmond, Miss D'Arnell had then a double motive in devoting herself to alleviate the sorrows of her protector. During the whole morning and day she repeatedly stole to his door, and by every device tried to induce him to open it and admit her. She described how fine the day was, although a February day; and how deserving of being honoured by a short trip half-way down the avenue (the extent of the Count's walk, whenever he ventured abroad), or at least by a saunter in the garden. She brought her guitar, and sitting on a little stool outside the chamber, accompanied herself in all the songs that used to soothe him; but every wile proved vain. At last, with a heavy and sincere sigh, she told him she was ill and unhappy. This soon brought him out; and, faintly smiling on the beautiful girl, her emaciated and feeble guardian led her to the drawing-room.

"Now you must and shall take one little stroll with me, down the avenue," continued Rosalie, as, sitting by his side, every endeavour to amuse him failed. He mournfully shook his head in refusal.

"But there is a particular reason," she continued; "do you remember the last time we took the same walk?"

"It was only yesterday, Rosalie."

"Well; and do you remember the great old dog that, as his ragged master passed the gate, came prowling up the avenue, and showed such a sudden liking for you?"

The Count slightly remembered the dog, but not his attentions, spoken of by Rosalie.

"I saw him, though, first stand to look at you, and then he came limping after us, as we walked back to the house, snuffing and smelling as if he thought he could make you out: just before you stepped into the hall, he did seem to have made up his mind about you, and wagged his spare tail, and attempted to jump round you: I feared he might prove troublesome, and so threatened him away with my handkerchief. After we came in, the servants tried to scold

him away : he was too aged to be beaten. But now for the point of the story :—he will not go away ;—he has made many requests to be admitted at the hall door ; and, for all that can be done, is resolved not to retire farther from the house than the spot in the avenue where he and you first met. The poor old brute has slept out there last night, and is sitting shivering in the cold there this moment ;—will you come and ask him what he wants, or what he knows about you?"

With a faint interest, the Count inquired the kind of dog he appeared to be. When Rosalie had described him as a large dog, of the Newfoundland species, her companion's interest increased ; and, after a moment's pause, he offered Rosalie his arm, and walked out with her.

At about the place mentioned by the young lady the animal appeared, indeed, seated ; his head and eyes turned to the house. The moment the Count came down the hall steps he stood up, and seemed to exert to the utmost his dimmed eyesight, as if, according to Rosalie, again trying to make him out. They drew close, and he crept, with a lowered neck and tail, smelling all round him. After a little time, the tail began to move ; and, finally, the old dog, looking up steadfastly into the Count's face, uttered low and short barks, and cut some capers, as lively as his great age, and perhaps his remaining doubts, permitted.

"There," said Rosalie, "he knows you quite well."

"It is very strange, Rosalie—very agitating, indeed," answered the Count. "Twenty years ago I had such a dog ! but a dreadful circumstance separated us, half the world's distance from Ireland ; and how he has come home, if, indeed, it is the same animal, I cannot, without horrible misgivings, suppose. Down, sir ! down !" continued the Count, trembling with excitement, as the dog, growing more convinced, attempted to jump upon him ;—"down, Sancho, down !"

At the sound of the name given him, and while the Count's emaciated hand patted his head, the dog seemed to arrive at full certainty, and his yelpings and pranks evinced the excess of his joy. "Sancho, man!" continued the Count, stretching out his hands, while tears started to his eyes, "my poor Sancho, is it you?"

"Wow, wow, wo-ouw-ou !" answered Sancho, plunging on

the hands that had often fed him, and fondling them, and licking them all over.

"If dogs can weep, he sheds tears himself," said Rosalie, while her own trickled fast.

"It is he—my old, old friend, Sancho," resumed the Count, as, overcome by his weak feelings, he knelt on one knee, and bent his head to the delighted old brute, who thereupon greeted his master's face, as he had before greeted his hands.

"And what brought you here, Sancho," continued the Count; "where do you live? and who is now your protector in old age?"

Sancho cocked his ears at the inquiring tone of the voice, looked into the speaker's eyes, and then, whether or not he vaguely comprehended the question, or that the action was a result of his own sudden thought, gave an inviting prance and bark; trotted, in a serious business-like way, towards the avenue gate, stopped, looked back, returned, took the Count's skirt in his mouth, and again moved off, conveying as plainly as a sagacious dog can do it, "Come with me, and you shall see."

The Count unconsciously advanced in his steps. This was the moment that, in performance of his promise to Redmond, Padhre was on his way to visit Cushneiche in the gaol. He now appeared striding rapidly by, when the scene within attracted him. He stopped short, looked in through the bars of the gate, and whistled. Sancho started at the sound, and ran to him in new demonstrations of joy. In a few seconds he returned to the Count, and again pulled his skirts, as if proposing an introduction between him and the hermit. The Count drew back in terror. Padhre, rivetting his eyes upon him at about twenty yards distance, also fell back. Sancho ran to him again. He thrust in his arm through the bars, seized the dog by the neck, and in an appealing tone cried—

"In the name of the blessed Trinity, call him by his name!"

"Sancho!" screamed the Count. Padhre replied in a piercing shriek, and disappeared from the gate. The count tottered and swung round. The weak arms of Rosalie supported him.

"Who is that man?" he gasped out; "have you ever seen him before, Rosalie? what is his name?"

"He is a poor recluse, sir, called Padhre of the Castle, from his having inhabited one of the little ruins by the river's side, nearly twenty years, they say."

"Twenty years!" repeated the Count, and lay senseless in her arms. Rosalie cried aloud; servants came out, and he was conveyed into the house; Sancho, at Rosalie's desire, being also taken care of.

When he recovered, the Count asked his gentle attendant to get him a draught she would find in his closet. She presented it; he drank it, and from its effects, seemed to gain strength and energy. He then required to know if Rosalie could refer him to any one who would be able to give a satisfactory account of Padhre. She knew of no such person or persons, unless it might be the two old men who constantly attended upon him in the Castle, and during his walks. The Count desired to be left alone; and, in about an hour after the scene in the avenue, she saw him, to her great surprise, issue from the house, and, with an earnest step, through the avenue gate.

He continued his way towards the ruins. As he entered among them, the two old men, who on this day had gone out to beg without Padhre, he being too ill to leave the chance of a necessity for their attendance, appeared coming home by another path. Their figure and dress, and their presence in the lonesome place, convinced the visitor they were the persons he sought, and he at once required at their hands an account of who and what the hermit was.

"An' who is id that axes?" demanded Daddy Clayton, in no better humour than usual; "an' is this the way we're to be vexed an' bothered, morning, noon, and night, by people we know nothin' of, an' care less about, comin' to bring us to an account in our own place? An' what knowledge duv they want to get iv him that has nothin' to do wid the world, or wid the gentle or simple, or one that brathes the breath o' life in the world, bud is in hands that'll take care iv him to his dyin' day?"

"Saucy old man," said the Count; but he was immediately interrupted by the clamours of both, returning his language with interest, and screaming out to him to "lave their house an' their place, an' take their heavy curse along wid him." He believed them to be mad, and, as a last resource, flung down a heavy purse, renewing his requests. Daddy Clayton

precipitated himself on the largess and crooked it up, but gave no return, contenting himself with still commanding the visitor to retire instantly. His companion, however, moved, perhaps, as well by the Count's appearance, and the great interest he showed in his inquiries, as by his bounty, drew near and whispered—"Ax your questions iv the priest, Father Fenelly; we know no more nor you do; but he knows all—for it's in his hands Padhre is, an' it's he hir'd us to watch him, mornin', noon, an' night, afther the time we dhragged him from the river, when he wanted to lie in id."

The Count knew where Mr. Fenelly lived, and, acting on this advice, immediately walked towards his house. It was but a short distance from the ruins. About halfway, the person he was speeding to seek approached him. They met in mutual agitation, and fixed their looks on each other.

"I was about to visit you, sir," began the Count; "I had an inquiry to make, which, I am told, you can answer—only one question. Do you know a person they call Padhre-na-Moulh?"

"I expected your question, Count. I do know the man. I have known him these twenty years, since his first coming to this country."

"Who is he? what is his real name, sir? do you know that?"

"I do; but, although your agitation seems sufficient for certainty, allow *me* a question which must be solved before your own: what is your reason for these inquiries?"

"I have just seen him—about an hour ago—for the first time, here—and I believe I have seen in him a brother—a wretched brother!"

"And when he saw you, at the same time, he was as certain of the connexion; for he came to me and said so; but one other question, if you please: the name *you* bear is no more your real name than that by which he is known? am I right?"

"You are; my true name is M'Carty."

"Then, Count, you have indeed beheld, after his contrition and sufferings of twenty long years, your unfortunate brother Collum."

The priest extended his arm to support his friend in the increased agitation this solemn confirmation brought on.

"Wonderful heaven! wretched Collum! praise to the

double mercy that would not permit his crime, and yet that wrought upon his heart to repent and offer up a life's atonement for the intention to perpetrate it! and praise, ten thousand praises to the goodness that leaves us both alive so long, that, after his twenty years of misery, I may console his torn heart by a brother's forgiveness! oh, wonderful! and perhaps, good God! perhaps the child too—my boy! perhaps——"

"He lives, sir," said the priest; "and Collum is this moment employed in a business that puts him in possession of an estate purchased for him with the treasure honourably amassed by his father."

"My boy, Mr. Fenelly! do you talk of my boy? and am I a father yet?"

"You are, sir, the happy father of a youth, who, in heart and mind, is an honour to his father; and though to this hour, Redmond does not know his poor uncle, Collum has known him, and watched him closely, since a few months after the day he brought him here, an infant."

"Redmond, you say? what Redmond? can you mean the lad that, shortly after I settled in Ireland, helped to save my life, and, until a few days back, visited at my house?"

"The same."

"Great Providence! what mystery is this? I heard a report of the parentage of that youth, which, because I suspected him of attentions to my ward, made it imperative on me to decline his visits: what caused the report? can you say, Mr. Fenelly?"

"Perhaps I cannot tell what first gave rise to it; but of its existence, at present, I believe I can give you some account; not here, however: let us walk towards the old castles. I was proceeding thither to await the return of your brother from the business which now engages him. Come, sir; I perceive the two old warders I have placed over him issuing forth, in quest of their charge, I suppose; though, were they to meet him now, it is doubtful if they should know him; so we shall be undisturbed by their garrulity. Come, sir: but you tremble and draw back; perhaps you do not wish to see Collum this evening?"

"I do, Mr. Fenelly, I do; my heart faints with anxiety to see him, as well as to hear all it is necessary I should know: think not I can delay a moment: come; only let me have your arm."

They gained, in twilight, the hermit's castle, and entered and sat down, on two large stones, among the heap of ruins, in the apartment under Peter's cell. Mr. Fenelly resumed:

"To go on, Mr. M'Carty, with the last point upon which I said I would inform you, my story takes this shape. The moment Collum recognized you at the avenue gate, he ran to me, breathless and trembling, to tell me of the surprising event. I need not acquaint you that he believed you were dead—dead nearly twenty years: his own life for twenty years gives the assurance. I could not quite depend on his information; for, since we first met, your unhappy brother has shown, in occasional fits of insanity, how deep and corroding was his remorse; and thank God, that enabled him to show it, in any way. But he told me other matters, which, from the strong bearing upon them of his first story, and from the earnestness and clearness with which he pointed out their connection, in order to obtain my advice as to a certain step he instantly proposed to take, caused me to believe him in his sound senses, and aware of all he uttered. Collum informed me that, from Redmond's own lips, he had, a short time before his meeting with you, received an account of a claim of parentage made upon him by a depraved character, lately well known here, of the name of Cushneiche, who is now in prison; and the youth further gave him to understand that, working upon his terrors of the discovery of Cushneiche's claim, his guardian, Pratt, had got him to assent to the signing of a certain alliance with his, Pratt's family, this evening. Now, sir, you must know that, assured of your death, and not thinking himself bound to proclaim to the world his own dreadful part in the supposed tragedy, your brother had previously made up his mind to encourage Redmond in forming this very alliance; because, as you should further know, Pratt had taken possession of Redmond's estate and house, as his own property; had kept the title-deeds from Collum and from him; and altogether evinced such a mind as made it certain that, if your brother should openly bring him to account, the old lawyer would oblige him to prove his real identity, and so, most probably, discover his crime; Collum, therefore, sought to promote a marriage between your son and Pratt's daughter, for the purpose of at once ensuring to Redmond the independence that was his right, and of hiding from mankind, and from his nephew

among the number, that he was a fratricide, and that nephew the son of a man who fell by the hand of his own brother. But, while speaking to me, awhile ago, under the impression, first, that Pratt had, in the base claim set up by the robber Cushneiche, taken unfair means to compel his ward into the alliance ; next, that the youth disliked the match, on account of another liking elsewhere ; and next, and most important of all, that you still lived, and that therefore the necessity for his former concealment of his real name and character no longer existed : speaking, I say, under these impressions, Collum changed his opinion of the expediency of allowing Redmond to form an alliance against his will and hopes of happiness, and, with my approbation, went off to Pratt : re-assuming the apparel in which, twenty years ago, he presented himself to the lawyer, after the purchase of the estate, and when he delivered up Redmond to his charge ; while I speak, no doubt, they have met ; and we may soon expect Collum here, to give us the result of their interview."

"This accounts, Mr. Fenelly, for Pratt's publishing his base rumour ; it is clear he did so, and, in conjunction with the robber, followed it up, as you say, in order to terrify my son into the marriage. But why so anxious for the measure ? why exert himself to ensure a union between his daughter and Redmond ? I cannot understand that."

"The time specified by the statute of limitations has not yet quite expired since the date of the purchase of the estate in another name than his own, sir ; and, perhaps, the old pleader thought it good policy to ensure to his daughter, and thereby partially to himself, a property to which he has no real title, and which the reappearance of the true owner (even within the few months that, if expired, would place him in safety) might wholly take out of his hands. I have no difficulty there. My chief question on this point regards his forming a plot with Cushneiche to effect his purpose. I do not think a prudent person like Mr. Pratt would run the risk of committing himself to such a character, particularly when his own assertions to Redmond, and the prevalence of the rumour I am sure he originally circulated, would, with good management, have been enough. And, indeed, I believe he never acted in concert with that robber."

"Your raverence spakes rason," said the voice of a man, from the water-course over their heads that led to the hermit's

little cell. They looked up, and a figure passed along and disappeared; and then they heard a foot coming down the stairs to the room where they sat. It was Cushneiche himself who spoke:—after emerging out of the gaoler's cabbage-garden, he had bent his steps, in consequence of Redmond's information about the locket, to seek the solitary in his castle; had entered the ruin, before the Count and the priest: explored in vain for the person he wished to meet; when they came in, secreted himself, in habitual caution, within the recess above; so overheard their conversation: ascertained, to his great astonishment and delight, who one of the speakers was; and, at last, at the proper time, gave the interruption.

In a few seconds the old robber stood before the priest and the Count. The latter started at his appearance.

"The neighbours they calls myself Cushneiche, your raverence," he continued: "an' happenin' to hear a little of what you said, I just stepped down to uphould the last words you spoke."

"If we may believe you, man," said the priest, while his companion looked, in the dim light, closely and anxiously at Cushneiche, "you have come in time, indeed, to give us some explanation of your motive in claiming Redmond as your son——"

"Juan M'Carty, your raverence manes," interrupted Cushneiche: "I was by when they put the name on him, at the chrishenin'."

The Count again started, and breathed hard.

"An' that chrishenin' happened a little while afther my captain, Collum M'Carty, came in his brave ship to take home his brother Felix to Ireland, an' all Felix's threasure along wid him," continued Cushneiche: "an' the child got his name in Felix M'Carty's grand house, near the coast, and Collum stood godfather. Musha, sir," suddenly turning to the Count, "do you know who's spakin' to you yet?"

"Mullally?" starting up.

"Keeraun Mullally, every inch of him," answered the robber.

"Mr. Fenelly! here is new matter for amazement! Generous, though wretched man!" extending his hand; "I have not forgotten the act of mercy you once showed me. But how came you to Ireland? and why do you now stand before me? Oh, Mr. Fenelly, you behold the man who—when, as he

says, Collum came to me, across the seas, I knew not from where, for we had been parted for years,—and when, at Collum's instance, I turned all my colonial property into bullion, and embarked it, with my orphan child, in his vessel—you here see the man who, ere we had cleared the Western Islands, was deputed by a wretched brother to row me from the ship, only as far out to sea as might hinder my dying cries from being heard, and there——" The speaker's recollections overpowered him.

"An' there," said Cushneiche, taking up the story, "Yallow Sam an' I broke ordhers, for the first time, an' just rowed about half a league farther, an' left you to a Godsend on the shore of a bit o' land, where the only foes you had to fear, Masther Felix, war the wild bastes, an' the hunger an' starvation; none o' them as bad, howsomdever, as the rage an' revenge of a born brother, an' one that ought to be a Christhen man; an' that's not the way we'd part you, sir, if we had any other way to stow you off; an' if Captain Collum wasn't waitin' for us on the deck, in the blackness o' the blackest night ever fell from the heavens, to get an account of how we done his biddin', an' if we didn't fear to lose our own lives for savin' o' yours. An' now about one o' the questions you put to me. I'm standing afore you in this ould place to-night, becase I cum into it on the like arrand wid yourself an' his raverence, maybe, to thry if Padhre-na-Moulh isn't the same Collum that, for near twenty years, none iv us could hear of, it seems; an' you'll ax me what put the thought into my head, an' here's the rason. Do you remember Masther Felix, that before we left you on the wild island, Yallow Sam tuck off o' your neck a little keepsake, with letthers on it, an' a goold chain hangin' from it, tellin' you that it was the proof that Collum bid us bring back of the doin' o' the ordhers he sent us out to do?"

"Yes, a locket, holding at one side a tress of my dear wife's hair, and at the other, the initials of her maiden name? I remember it well."

"An' so do I; an' so I did this mornin', when I saw it round the neck o' your son, who tould me he got it in this ould castle. So, there's what brought me here; to see the man that gave it to him, or that had it in his hands afore he got it. An' it's wid a good will I'll spake in answer to your other questions, too, an' all they want me to tell, when your

honour just let's me ax a word o' my own. Sam and I gave the keepsake to Captain Collum, tellin' him his brother was swimmin' undher as many fathom o' wather as the sey could rowl over him—an' the good ship brought us all to England. In some time, for a rason you're to hear, I was forced to run that same ship across the seys, agin, widout any one to command her but myself; an' comin' near the place where Sam an' I left you, we touched and went ashore to see if you war alive or dead. A good while we thramped through the bit of an island, over an' hither, but saw no livin' crature, or a dead one either, till, walkin' back to the coast, we found the remains of a man, that the wild bastes, we thought, had dhragged into a hollow in the rocks, an' left there afther a hearty male. There was no face or fatures, an' the very clothes war tore away; an' we said to one another that there you lay, or the little o' you that was left, any how; an' from that day out we gave up all thought of ever seein' much more o' you either, savin' your presence, Masther Felix."

"Alas! the poor remains should have been mine rather than those of a benefactor who met a shocking fate while assisting to rescue me. Some days after you abandoned me a sail came in view; I raised a signal; she approached me, and sent a boat. It was a French vessel. The boat's crew were numerous; one of them strayed away from his companions, after landing; before we could embark, tigers were heard in the jungle; the poor man had not been missed, or was now forgotten or unheeded; all crowded into the boat; we had not gained the ship when he appeared running towards the shore, and then we witnessed his dreadful death.

"I will continue to acquaint you with my fortunes afterwards, which you must be anxious to know. The unnatural and abominable crime of a brother could not be divulged. Even my own feelings were spared in suppressing it. I therefore represented myself to the captain of the vessel as a merchant who had been left on the island by the mutinous crew of a ship in which I had taken my passage to Europe. I could truly add, that great wealth had been plundered from me, and that, after more than twenty years of toil and industry, I now found myself pennyless. Suppressing my name, too, with the view of for ever hiding it from mankind, and particularly from my terrible brother—with a view, indeed, of disclaiming a name, that, in the person of that brother, had

been so immeasurably disgraced, I adopted the first Irish one I recollected—the same I now bear—O'Ruark. A wealthy and noble Frenchman on board, who had been married to an Irish lady, became interested in me, as well on account of my country, as of my misfortunes. He offered to assist me when we should arrive in Europe. With little hope or care about the future, I accepted his offer. He kept his word. Under his auspices, and, indeed, his efforts, rather than mine, for the spring of my own energy was broken—life had no longer an interest for me—I again arrived at wealth. He was a widower, like myself, with an only daughter; and the single solace of my darkened and most miserable existence was to assist the growth of that sweet girl's mind; I loved her as a child, and even before the death of her father, she repaid me almost with a child's affection: he died; upon his death-bed Rosalie D'Arnell's hand was placed in mine by my excellent friend, and I promised to be a father to her indeed: I could not entertain a hope that my own boy lived; whatever was the horrible motive to destroy me, must, I thought, have also compassed his destruction: and the little power left to me of loving anything human became roused towards poor Rosalie. Alas! the uniform melancholy of my life, increased after the decease of my friend and by the approach of old age, has allowed her but little happiness under my protection. A few words more conclude my story. Count D'Arnell's death made a residence in France irksome to us both; added to this, the yearning that even wretches feel to lay their bones in their native land, faintly stirred in my bosom; I met in Paris an Irish gentleman who wished to dispose of the house and small estate I now occupy; we came to terms; and the result was, that the hand of Providence conducted me to the spot where a late happiness and blessing were in store for me."

"We hard you say just now," observed Cushneiche. "that you never guessed the rason o' Captain Collum's doin's, in your regard; or somethin' o' the kind. First an' foremost, on the head o' that, do you know, yet, what kind of a ship he came to see you in, an' what kind o' hands sailed undher him?"

"Collum told me that some years after I left Ireland—where, indeed, we parted in unkindness."

"Yes, sir; he thought you had no right to keep all the little fort'n your father left between ye."

"I did not keep it all, though I knew he hated me for saving out of his imprudent hands a small portion of the bequest that was exclusively mine; no, I was not a selfish brother; he had means from me to support years of idle and disreputable squandering; and I ceased to supply him, only when I became assured that to do so, was but to encourage him in a ruinous career, and, at the same time, ruin myself, and when my remonstrances, as an elder brother, were not only neglected, but met with ungrateful, and, I may say, savage hostility."

"Well, sir; but there was another little rason why Collum didn't love nor like a bone in your skin. You married the girl that, afore you an' she cum together, he was dyin' for."

"Is that possible?" starting in unfeigned surprise; "I never suspected he could dislike me for such a reason, because I never knew before this moment that such a one existed. My wife—before she was my wife—could not have been aware of his feelings?"

"I believe not, sir; an' it was fresh fuel to the fire in Black Collum's breast, within, that, when he put himself in her way, the colleen's eye never tould that she liked to see him afore her. He was too proud to beg the love from her; but her cowldness was enough to gnaw his heart for ever, an' to make him hate, in the bottom o' the heart, the man that won more favour than he could,—though that man was own mother's son to him. An' now, what did he tell you, when he came to see you, sir?"

"He told me that, as I said, a few years after I left Ireland, he went to seek his fortune in Spain; there met a countryman whose mercantile pursuits had produced him much wealth; entered the house of this person as an assistant; became a partner, married his daughter, was at last trading to the colonies on his own account, and so had come owner and captain together of the fine vessel you speak of."

"Now listen to the thrue story. Afther ye parted in Ireland, he went to sey, an' worked for years afore the mast; deserted from his ship; fell in, among the American Islands, with some o' the last o' the bould 'brethren o' the coast'; found their life more to his hand an' his likin' than any other; got promotion an' command among 'em,—for out o' six ships' crews even of such born divils as they war, few had the hand an' heart to do, an' fewer the head to plan, like Collum—

barrin' in the ould times, lads like ould Van Horn, Sawkins, and Morgan the Taffy, that I heard tell of: an' so, sir, it was in a good ship, borrowed from the king o' Spain himself, by two simple boatfuls o' such boys as we're spakin' of, wid Black Collum at their head, an' my own poor bones among 'em, that your brother cum to visit you; an' it was afther ten years of a life spent on the wild seys in such company, he cum; an' it was from the doin' o' things that harden the heart o' man, in cruelty, as well as courage an' bouldness, he cum; things that good Christhins wouldn't believe, an' that the wide an' silent ocean war the fittest witness of;—this was the brother you met at last, afther a partin' o' twenty years, an' all his ould grudges fresh in his heart agin you; this was the man you thrusted yourself, an' your boy, an' your threasure to; the man that I often seen head an open boat to attack a mounted two decker, as sure of the battle as if he war the hell-fire divil in airnest, that his enemies tuck him for; the man that I often seen spring up into the mouths of ten roarin' cannon, the blazes, that couldn't kill him, scorchin' him, an' twenty hangers an' dirks hid for him in the cloud o' smoke he jumped, screechin', into; the man that never yet put his foot on a deck he didn't masther; an' the man, too, that never stood five minutes on the deck he masthered, without clearin' it from stim to sterun, from the mast-head to the hould, of every sowl that riz a hand or spoke a breath agin his right an' title.

"An' maybe, I can gi' your honour one or two rasons more why Black Collum let the dhoul tempt him, that night you remember so well. The first year you went across the sey, do you bring to mind a brown Spanish girl, that had no objections to your makin' your own of her? You do well, aroon. She an' Collum met afther; an', keepin' her mind to herself,—only that of an odd time I pumped it out of her,—she let him take her by the hand; they war together when he touched on the coast: she knew you, an' was at his elbow in the ship when you cum aboord, an' for the sake o' the threasure you had, as she purtended, it was her voice that first turned his thought to ruin you. Maybe he didn't mind her word about the threasure, but that his own ould hathred only wanted the wind of any word to blow it into a blaze. Maybe he did mind it: for we war just afther losin', by rason of our partner runnin' aground out of our company, the plundher of three

good galloons ; an' it can't be hid that love an' likin' for the goold an' the silver was always the freshest breeze that filled our canvas ; an', maybe, more than all, the wine an' the brandy, that ever made him a horned divil, entirely, fixed the thought in his head an' heart, that roarin' night.

"It's a thruth that the next mornin', Black Collum looked blacker than ever, an' we could all see it was a new darkness that cum upon him : but Yallow Sam an' I knew, above the rest, the raal manin' of it. We knew that the little conscience he had left, made hell's torments in his sowl within. An' a greater mark of his mind was in the way he began to grow fond o' the child of his brother : an' it warn't long until I gained the knowledge of how it all worked him.

"He called me below, one night, an' tould me it was in his thought to give up a sey life, an' with his brother's threasure, an' some of his own, buy a bit o' land in ould Ireland ; an' that he'd bring young Juan to live on it wid him, and lave it all to the boy on his death-bed. He axed me to stand by him in the schame, an' I promised. We landed in England, afther partin' a'most all hands, an' came bouldly into the mouth o' the comely river that runs into the sey from Lunnon. He an' I went up to the town, lavin' the ship in care o' Yallow Sam. There he saw an offer made in the newspaper to sell such an estate as he wanted, an' Pratt's name as the person to bargain wid for it. He wrote to Pratt, undher the name of Redmond Velasquez, an' got letthers in return. I saw them all ; for I was his adviser in everything. We had some delay in turnin' the whole of our threasure into money, afther the land was bought ; that was the rason he couldn't go over to Ireland in speed ; an' at last, when he did go, bringin' the boy wid him, an' the woman I tould you of, to take care of the boy, it was afore the same business was settled ; so that he left me in Lunnon wid word to wait till he cum back, when we could get all our money together, sellin' the ship, at the same time, and then we war to go to Ireland for life.

"Now comes on some o' the story ye like to hear best. About a week afther Collum left me, I got a letther from him, givin' an account of all he said an' done wid Pratt, an' how the title-deeds war not ready, but that the attorney gave him an' ownin' of 'em ; an' the way he put the child into his hands ; an', to make long short, the letther tould me all that you'll

soon hear I tould your son, sir, a few days back, to make him think I was his father; an' that I knew Pratt couldn't and wouldn't gainsay, undher the fear of two loaded pistols, in his hearin'. An' this letther was sent to me to bid me do some things to be ready for Collum's return to Lunnon, that we might have the less delay in goin' back together, to Ireland; an' the ship he sailed in was windbound at the time, in an Irish port. Well, I did what he bid me, an' waited for his comin'. But he didn't come. A month wore away, an' I hard nothin' o' my captain; an' my mind grew uneasy by rason of whisperins an' cullogin' about our ship an' us, that Yallow Sam tould me sthrayed to his ears. At last, I got another letther that a'most broke my heart. It was a letther to take a long lave o' me. Collum wrote word that we war to be parted for ever an' a day; that I could never hear more of him; that he was lost to me an' to the wide world, along wid me; that I might sell the ship, or keep it, an' take up the money, too, owin' to us in Lunnon, an' be my own masther; only he prached to me, like any soggarth or parson, to turn into some good coorse, an' end my life well, an' betther than he could now. What was I to think from this, but that the law had clapt hands on him, when he laste expected it, an' that it was his last speech he sent me? Divil another thing I b'lieved (an Yallow Sam was o' the same mind wid me) could turn the captain into a preacher, for all that was past an' gone—the throubles o' conscience for what he thought he done to his born brother, didn't give us a rason; sure if we had a notion that he was so sorry for it entirely, an' 'ud like to be undeceaved on the head of it, an' not take our own lives for disobeyin' his ordhers, it's long afore we'd tell him the thruth o' the business; so, cock-sure he was a gone man, Sam an' I began to be afeared on our own account; an' the whispers I tould you of growin' more suspicious every day, faith, we just slipt into the good ship one mornin', an' made for the ould point, to begin the world in the ould way, on our own bottoms. That was the time we touched to look for you, sir, on the bit of a wild island.

"But loock an' grace left us wid our captain. In a little while, the ship went to pieces on a rock; Sam an' I, out of all the hands, war picked up by an Englishman, an' landed on English ground, once again. Some little thrade like our

own, only in the land-sarvice, was goin' on, that time, upon the high-roads o' the place, an' afore we'd got over to Ireland to see what Pratt done wid the child—for that schame was always in our mind, afther the first fright o' runnin' away in our own poor ship—sure we thought, as we wanted thravellin' charges, we might as well turn our hand to industhry. But, bad loock to the land, an' glory to the sey—axin' your raverence's pardon—there was no such fightin' room, or sailin' room, as we war used to; an' we made a bad business of it, an' war soon captured an' put up. The turn of a sthraw saved our necks, an' they sent us to Botany; an' as I tould the boy yesterday evenin' (only changin' a little thing or two, to sarve a purpose) —we had such good lookin' afther there, that, wid all our knowledge, we couldn't slip a cable on 'em for near twenty long years, until at last a good chance stood our friend, an' away we worked our passage to Ireland, still bent on seein' whether or no the ould attorney done his duty by our captain's brother's son.

"I remembered Collum's first letther to me, an' we soon made out the ground we wanted. We couldn't dhrame of callin' Pratt to account, his own self, or in an open way, in regard he might by that manes find out what kind of a customer he had in Collum for the estate, an' so the boy might be ruined entirely; an' maybe, for another rason; we landed in the poor ould counthry as bare as Job, an' our mouths war to be filled, an' our backs covered; an' so, afore we got near Pratt's part o' the counthry, a thrick or two o' the ould thrade sarved our turn; an' it was like the lawyer-man 'ud soon smell us out, an' that the welcome he'd give us 'ud be none o' the kindest, an' not one that 'ud speed our business either. But to see the boy himself was our schame; an' if Pratt didn't thrate him well, to tell him who an' what he was, an' his right to the estate, an' everything else we ought to tell him. Redmond, as they called him, wasn't at home, howsomdever; an' we had to wait a long while till he cum from Dublin; an' then, to tell God's thruth, we war forced to make more cruises about the place, wid help from recruits on the spot, that put us in more danger than ever from Pratt an' his sort, an' gave more rason why we war behouldin' to take care who we opened our mind to.

"At last I come across the boy, on the hill near the house;

an' at last I'm to tell ye why I put the quare story on him ye know about, instead o' the thrue one I thravelled so far to tell him. First, I didn't know him from Adam, when we met, until he wanted me to take, along wid a brave hanful o' goold an' silver, a little meddle, like that I remembered, even in the light of a bad moon, was hung round his neck, at the christhenin' of him, by his uncle an' his godfather, an' that I often seen afore—an' maybe the way it came into Collum's hands, too. Well, when I saw it was the boy I wanted, I saw at that same time he was in some fit o' passion or other, as high as the highest wind the dhoul ever blew, an' not the laste fit to hear sense an' rason, or take the right coorse afther hearin' a story that consarned him nearly; more-betoken, however it happened—an' I know, now, though I couldn't guess, then—his flurry seemed to be on the head of the very business I wanted to talk to him about; an' to mend the matther, the moment I just threw out a word o' soundins, like, that I could help him to a knowledge o' the father of him—an' this was afore I guessed he was ravin' on the self-same question—the gorçoon opened on me in such a way, an' threatened me so hard, in regard o' what he'd do to me an' to the wide world if I didn't show him his father was safe, or tell him who kilt him or hurt him, supposin' him not to be safe, that, faith, genteels, as we war alone on that wild hill, an' as he an' I had a little tussle at the first goin' off, an' I nothin' the betther o' the same, it cum into my head not to tell him at that present minute the whole o' the right story. But as he bawled at me to tell him somethin' or other, an' as a sthrife betwixt us 'ud lade to no good, any how, whichever was up or down, why, afther takin' a start o' thought on the whole matther, here's what I said, an' why I said it:—

"'Your're my own child, Redmond,' says I, "becase, genteels, if I tould him who the raal father was, an' what happened him at the hands of his own brother, an' our lavin' him on the island, instead o' throwin' him neck and heels out o' the boat, d'ye think the angry boy 'ud be satisfied wid my account? or b'lieve we hadn't kilt him instead o' savin' him?—or wait to pondher it one way or the other, only either fly at me, to take my life that minute, or else drag me off to a gaol, an' so put himself as well as me into Pratt's clutches? But it cum across my mind, that if I could persuade him he was the son of an ould free-boother (though I say the word that

shouldn't say it), tellin' him at the same time all the rest o' the business, just as Collum's first letther tould me, only puttin' myself in Collum's place, an' gettin' Pratt to prove my words afther, it cum across me that this 'ud cool the boy, an' bring him to his rason ; the shame o' such a father as I was, God help me ! 'ud make him hould his tongue, an' take a close part, an' lave me to see him righted, in a way o' my own ; and then, when all was clane over, my last thought was to dhraw off out o' harum's way, from him, an' Pratt, an' the whole kit o' ye, an' write a letther, as well as I remember how, that 'ud clear up the only point I darkened him on, an' give the name an' karācthur of the thrue Redmond Velasquez, an', by coorse, the thrue man that once owned him. An' so, there's the manin' o' the part I tuck, an' there's all my little schames for ye, from beginnin' to endin', as bright as they cum into Keeraun Mullally's head, an' as he done 'em, or as he meant to do 'em, any how."

CHAPTER XII.

"It was of a dreary night in December I first met your brother Collum, sir," said Father Fenelly, when he and Mr. Felix M'Carty, as we are now obliged to call him, discoursed together shortly after the old pirate's story had been related, "of a Saturday night, too ; I remember it well ; one of the last upon which my poor people crowd into the little chapel to prepare for their Christmas duty. Ere I entered the confessional, I had observed a very remarkable man sauntering, or rather dodging about the chapel-yard that was before the chapel-door. He wore a sailor's dress ; one marking the degree above the common sailor, for aught I know ; but his air, his face, his step, and the whole bearing of his tall, straight figure suggested, at all events, the idea of a superior person. Something wondering to see a stranger of his kind in such a place, and also recollecting that on one or two occasions before I had noticed him, at a distance, in the lonesome walks about the village, I passed into the chapel, sat down in my confession-box, and began the duties

of the evening. A great number, as is usual on the approach of Christmas and Easter, were waiting on my ministry, or "to be heard," as we call it, in their turns; and I could not change fast enough in my box for them, and open the slide of the little round orifice at either side, to listen alternately to the varied avowals of human frailty that craved my advice, my control, and finally, through my mouth, a conditional promise of pardon from my God. An hour might have been thus spent, when, chancing to look out through the slit in the curtain of my box, I recognized the tall and almost sublime figure of the stranger, leaning against one of the little rude props that supported the thatched roof of my humble chapel. From another prop, the weak light of a tin sconce, or lamp, fell upon his features, and allowed me to see their expression; and I thought I read upon his cloudy brow, and his rolling eye, and in his half-open and contorted mouth the story of a bosom blackened with crime, torn with remorse, and just beginning to work in the terrible labour of a first repentance. I could perceive that he eyed askance the humble crowds that, in the twilight, knelt around him where he stood; and, now and then, that his agitated glance followed those who came, some moving on their knees, to confess their burden of sin; and those who, their ordeal over, returned from the confessional to the railing of the sanctuary to throw themselves there, in aspirations of thanks to God, and of promises of future virtue. Having remarked him, for some time, I proceeded in my duty. About another hour elapsed before I thought I could properly spare time to pay him more attention, and a sweet little child of thirteen or fourteen, who went from me with permission to approach her first communion, had, accompanied by her father, also a penitent of the evening, gone to the sanctuary to complete their devotions; when I was alarmed by a sudden noise and outcry, that spread among all the people of the chapel, and hastily stepping out of my box, I found the poor stranger just after flinging himself prostrate by the side of the child, while his frame shook, groans and sobs broke from his manly breast, and the glorious tears of a true repentance ran down the backs of the hands with which he covered his face. Not unaffected, myself, I raised him and held him in my arms, and whispered the words of sublime consolation my merciful and Almighty Master had commanded me to drop as so many

drops of oil upon the torn heart of the remorseful sinner. My words seemed to overwhelm him with greater agony. He would have again fallen at my feet. I resisted his attempt. We retired from the wondering and sympathizing crowd, into the little sacristy at the back of the altar. That night—that moment, Collum M'Carty first sued for peace with his God; but if there is more to be told, he must be the speaker."

"There is more to be told, and he will be the speaker," repeated a low and broken voice; and all looking up, saw the figure Redmond had just seen in his guardian's house, filling the blank of the square door-way of the room they occupied, and swaying to and fro, as if from physical weakness, or agitation, or both, the limbs refused their usual office.

"Collum, Collum! brother, brother!" exclaimed Felix M'Carty, in a voice almost as broken and feeble; he rose up as he spoke, and took a step towards the door; the wretched Collum, with a faint groan, stumbled over the stone threshold, and lay on the floor, at his brother's feet, prostrate, senseless, and bleeding in the temple from the violence of his heavy fall. They raised him, and bore him down stairs to the nearest of the squalid couches usually occupied by one of his old attendants. When he had partially recovered, and found his hand in that of his brother, he uttered mournful cries, snatched the hand away, and again laid his head at Felix's feet.

"Oh, Collum, my brother, my poor brother!" resumed Felix, "why do you refuse my hand?"

"You cannot, you never can say, 'forgive!'" murmured the unhappy man, as his face was hid on the floor.

"I can, Collum; brother, I can; I have said the word; I say it now; and let you only say another word: say but that you can love me at last, and for the time to come, and we may yet be happy brothers together."

Collum slowly raised himself, looked gradually but steadfastly into the features of the speaker, then, clasping his hands, addressed himself in joyful murmurs to heaven, and finally embraced his brother's knees, while that brother put his arms round his body, and inclined a cheek to his.

"The peace and pardon of the God of peace be with you, and dwell with you, my children," said the clergyman, kneeling. The old pirate, tears stealing down his iron cheeks,

knelt also, and added an "amen," not unacceptable, perhaps, even after his life of sin, in his present situation, and with his sincere feelings.

"The moment I left the child with Pratt, in the carriage," said Collum, as soon as he had gained the power of speaking, and ascertained from the words of those around him to what extent they wished him to speak: "I walked with my bad companion, to the ship, that, at only a short distance from the little sea-coast village, awaited to bear us back to England. Oh, let me humbly, but earnestly request you to believe that even then, although my evil nature had not permitted a thorough change, true sorrow and remorse weighed me down for the unnameable crime of which I thought myself guilty; and guilty I was and am: although a merciful Providence would not permit the murder, I was guilty to the full extent of intention. The sea was not calm when we embarked; but I thought it smooth as glass, and I panted for the roaring and lashing waves that would lift our little vessel into the clouds, and dash it back again into the valleys of ocean, and scourge and buffet us, as did the tumbling passions which assailed my obdurate heart. I had my wish; the storm came; and came for an end at once more terrible and merciful than I had contemplated. During one dark day and darker night, we were driven from point to point around the shore of Ireland; until at last, upon some wild and almost desert part of the western coast, in the province of Connaught, I believe, our buffeted ship struck to pieces. It was near morning. I awoke to sense, lying among a pile of rocks, the partner of many of my crimes stretched by my side, while one of my hands grasped her hair. It seems I had rescued her; though I did not and do not remember the circumstances. She recovered, too, pouring forth curses the moment she had breath to give them utterance. She was mad: terror, and buffetings against the rocks, with their results, had bewildered her; her leg and arm, and some of her ribs were shattered, and she suffered great pain. She cursed me as her destroyer, and a hundred times called on heaven to shower down vengeance on my head, and hell to open at our feet, and receive us together. She denounced me as the murderer of my brother, whom, by her ravings I now discovered, she had once fiercely loved; and called on me to prepare for the eternal miseries that crime kept in store for me. Grow-

ing worse, she conjured up his spirit, and her hoarse screams, mixed with the hoarse roaring of the sea, and the rolling of her maniac eyes as she pointed him out among the grey rocks, or spoke to him to ensure maledictions to me, were horrible—in my bodily weakness and mental acknowledgments of all she said, they made me almost as mad as she was. Now and then she would furiously call on me to bring her water to cool her burning lips, and food for the hunger she only thought she felt; but I could not move from her side; my own thigh was sorely bruised, and I was unable to walk a step; and when her demands were not fulfilled, the frantic wretch repeated her terrible blasphemies, until the marrow froze in my bones. Once, as the sunless day was nearly spent, she turned suddenly on her side, as we lay stretched together, glared into my eyes, snatched my arm, and attempted to put it to her teeth. About half way in the night after our wreck, she died, clinging close to me, and calling me with her to the place of torments she anticipated for herself.

"I lay by her, until, in the darkness of that infernal night, the spirit of madness she had just breathed out, entered into me, and I was at last indeed as mad, and more accurst in my madness than the wretch I had survived. The crimes of which she but spoke, I felt; and all her terrors and fancies came tenfold more vividly to my diseased eye. The shade she had imagined was soon presented to me too; and the hell she raved of I also called up around me; the booming of the sea turned into the roar of its flames. Towards morning I sank down, again senseless.

"I was aroused by two fishermen, who lifted me up. Reason came back, but remorse was confirmed. They buried the body in the sand; and then helped me to crawl towards their distant and humble cabin. On our way they found a strongly clasped trunk, with a spring lid, which I knew to be mine; they gave it into my possession without a word. Under their roof I recovered from the contusion on my thigh, and gained strength to walk about and think. My mind took a vague resolve to go back to the village, in the neighbourhood of which I had left my brother's child, and there retire from the world, perhaps without discovering myself, or without claiming the estate I had purchased, and spend my life in watching him. I had firmly determined never to seek out my old mates in England. In fact, conscience was weighing

me to the earth, and already sapping the strength of my fierce heart, although I was not yet humbled into a true, full, and, as it ought to be, overwhelming view of the crime I had perpetrated.

"I purchased a sailor's dress out of the contents of my trunk; stuffed into the trunk my half Spanish dress, and brought it with me, by a secret conveyance, to the village spoken of. Avoiding the little inn where I had first met the agent, I took up my abode in one of even less consideration, on the outskirts of the village. It was of a Sunday evening that I reached the secluded place. Its humble people, men women, and children, were walking about gaily, or laughing in groups at their doors. Peace and simplicity spread around me, and the contrast of my bosom grew blacker. I heard the chime of a little bell, and many of the villagers, young and old, hastened off to some particular point. Following them, I came to a lowly, thatched building, which, from the rude cross at one end, I recognised to be a Roman Catholic chapel, removed but a short distance from the Protestant Church, that was formed out of part of the ruins of an old abbey, and both having a common burying-ground. The simple crowds entered the chapel; I lurked in the churchyard; and presently rose the vesper chaunt, that in my boyish days was so familiar to my ears, and often to my tongue; I thrilled from head to foot; my pulses beat achingly; my throat was pained; I felt all the symptoms of coming tears; but they were too darkly pent up to flow yet. That was the first moment, however, in which the first thought of religious satisfaction for my sin glanced across my mind.

"I returned to my lodging-house, and heard the landlady and some of her gossips speak about the great fortune that was newly come into Lawyer Pratt's hands, and of the supposed nephew he had sent to nurse at a neighbour's cabin. Next day, ascertaining the situation of the nurse's house, I walked out, and strolled about it. In some time a young married woman, carrying a child in her arms, crossed my path. From her prattle to the unconscious infant, I learned it was my brother's son. Stopping her, to ask a word about my way back to the village, I took an opportunity to approach the child. It stretched out its little arms to me. I shrunk from it in horror, and walked rapidly away. The parish priest just then appeared in view, riding along the road from his

house, to administer spiritual comfort to some relative of a poor man, who, weeping profusely, ran at his side. An impulse seized me to wait till he should be coming back, and fling myself at his feet. For this purpose I sauntered about the road; the priest re-appeared; I could not keep my resolution.

"For a week I thus continued in a lethargy, if so it may be called, which, leaving me alive to all the tortures of my situation, would not permit an effort for relief. Every day I stole out, to the cabin where the child was at nurse, and waited for hours to catch a sight of it. At last came the Saturday night Mr. Fenelly has already spoken of. Without any summons from the chapel-bell, I saw the people going off, one by one, to the chapel. I recollected on what business. I recollected it was to prepare themselves for meeting, with clean breasts, the anniversary of the day upon which the Saviour appeared among men, to shed his blood for the blackest sinner. I walked quickly in the footsteps of the villagers; but arrived at the chapel-door, I could not enter. As I hesitated, the priest came towards the chapel; I saw his eye watching me, and I slunk back in terror. In some time a father came up, leading by the hand a beautiful girl. Ere they went into the chapel, he stooped down and kissed her cheek. I followed *them*.

"I had been in great churches in great cities; I had heard the organ's peal echoing through the arched intricacies of fretted roofs and branching aisles and cloisters; I had seen homage done to God amid the blaze of a hundred lights, the fume of incense, and the pomp of ceremony; but never did I feel the influence of religion so powerfully as in the dusk and the silence of this lowly, thatched chapel, and among the humble village crowds that knelt around me. There were no spectators here; none come to look on, and go away unprofitably; all were actors, and all were in earnest. I leaned against a wooden prop, and looked stealthily around me. The pain came again into my throat, and my breast swelled and swelled as if it would have burst. My eye sought the father and his innocent and beauteous child. They had placed themselves at different sides of the confession box. The father first knelt up and waited for his daughter. When she had ended her confession, they walked hand in hand to the rails, passing closely by me. He smiled; and as she looked up into his

face, smiling too, tears swam in her truly angelic eyes. Before this I had been much moved; now I was subdued. I tottered to the sanctuary, and there, falling by the girl's side, 'O God!' I cried, 'let guilt sue for pardon in the company of innocence!' The priest came to me, and we were soon alone.

"From that moment I bound myself by a solemn vow before the throne of mercy to lead a life of penitence. I did not deem the acts of expiation prescribed for me as anywise a sufficiency of atonement. I bound myself by a solemn vow, and the conditions of that vow I have observed, even when my mind was weak and wandering:—Twenty years of loneliness and silence among men, while the bread of my existence was to be begged at the doors of the charitable. The product of the wealth, partly for which I had steeped my hands in a brother's blood, I for ever renounced. The usual comforts of lodging and lying down, the show of dress,—anything by which a mark of equality with my fellows could be retained, was interdicted. I joyfully took up any burden of atonement; joyfully, because, with the terrible reprehensions that impressed on me a full sense of my guilt, the sweet whispers of conditional pardon and mercy stole into my heart. Twenty years—a life, even if life could last thrice twenty years, was now nothing to me but the interval between crime and its pardon—between misery and peace!

"Perhaps the excess of my feelings urged me to overstrain the terms according to which I could hope to be forgiven; perhaps reason, then and afterwards, wavered in the combat of hopes and fears, of recollections and terrors, within me. That very night I left the village, and walked to this ruin, which has since been my residence. Carrying with me the trunk that contained the dress in which you now see me, and the remaining money of which I stood possessed, I rooted a hole in the wall of the cell over head, and buried it from my sight or touch for ever. My sailor's clothes were worn until they fell in rags from my back, and then other rags supplied them. While in the fisherman's hut, near where I had been shipwrecked, and before my mind finally revolted at the idea of rejoining my former comrades, I had written a letter to the man I see here at my side, giving him an account of my interview with Pratt, and my disposal of the child: now, in accordance also with a promise made, I again wrote to him, taking a farewell, and admonishing him to turn from evil.

My days, and the greater part of my nights, were spent in lowly prayers, or in contemplating the enormity of my crime, so that my soul might be moved to greater sorrow, or any occasional impatience of my lot absorbed in a sense of duty. But I was not always successful in obtaining the quiet that prayer should confer. Perhaps, too, human nature sometimes grew stronger than my resolves; or madness itself may have come to raise terrible battles in my brain and heart. It is certain that, in my most bitter solitude, I was not left untempted. Self-destruction crossed my thoughts more than once; and upon a night, five years after my seclusion, I rushed, screaming, to the river side, and plunged in. But heaven again was merciful. Two old creatures, wanderers like myself, dragged me from the water; and constant visits from my adviser, their watchfulness, and, in a degree, their society, commanded and permitted by him, saved me till this hour.

"The question of the claim and birth of my brother's child did not fail to interest my most excellent counsellor. It was decided that, having sincerely entered into an atonement for my crime, I had no right to expose it to the world; and if the boy could have his own without any avowal that might incur this chance, I was not to interfere. Time was therefore taken to watch Pratt's intentions. Notwithstanding the rumour of his possessing the estate in his own right, they seemed favourable. In a few years he married, and had a daughter, and people said he destined his ward to be her husband. One evening I met the boy in his nurse's arms, in company with Pratt and his lady, and their own infant, and as I passed them unnoticed, certain expressions used by them made me assured that the common report was well founded. The education he gave my nephew, as years rolled on, left no doubt. It was with great sorrow, therefore, that a short time ago, I discovered Redmond's, or more properly, Juan's, disinclination to the proposed match. Wishing to give him a direction which would be for his own good, I often urged him to a union with his young and amiable friend; but in vain; his heart was bestowed on Rosalie D'Arnell. The occurrences of this day and night may show, however, that everything has happened for the best.

"I grow weak: I have been very ill for some days past; the effort I made to visit Pratt was forced; and now the sick-

ness returns : I am, indeed, very feeble——" he sank on the couch upon which he had hitherto been sitting ; his brother and the priest sprang to support him. " It will be useless," he continued, " I have had the sense of coming death on me before this ; and now —— My lips and throat are parched ; let any good Christian here go up to my little cell, and bring a drop of water to me for the love of God ; it is in a little box —— "

Cushneiche, saying he knew very well where it was, ran up the stairs. " Yes," continued Collum ; " and now, though I dare not and do not ask to have life shortened one hour, if I have not erred in my hopes, a blessed relief is at hand."

" Collum," said Felix, " do not speak those words ; your trials are over : you stand forgiven upon earth and in heaven ; the future upon earth should be happy ; and it shall, if a brother's care and love can make it so ; cheer up ; if you have strength to walk to my house —— "

" No, Felix," interrupted the wretch, " that can never be ; your forgiveness—your being alive to forgive me—is the greatest blessing ; your fellowship I cannot, dare not court, even was there a promise of life to seek it. Oh, my soul shrinks at the thought ! How could I sit by your fire-side ? How look into your face ? No, my brother, no ! give me your hand again ; I ask that : and now one drop of water ; one drop for His sake who—— " He was again silent ; Cushneiche appeared with the bottle ; as Felix stooped to put it to his mouth, he shuddered to touch his face,—a deathy perspiration spread over it.

" Collum," he resumed, " you must leave this place ; I will send my servants to bear you out of it ; farewell but for a moment."

" Stay," said Collum, faintly ; " if the priest is here—was he not here ? My brain swims, my eyes fail—but I think he was ;—let him lay his hands on my head—and though I cannot kneel, let him say the last words of pardon ; and you, too, my brother, you —— " His utterance quite failed. Mr. Fenelly hastily proceeded to discharge the duty demanded of him. Collum recovered a little, and as the clergyman had the sacrament with him, it was administered. All knelt in prayer : the tears and sobs of Felix only interrupting the solemn scene. At last there was a pause.

" Does he live yet ?" asked Felix of the priest.

"He does—and perhaps life is not in such great danger. Let us all exert ourselves for assistance. I will go home for some medicines of my own. This man can hasten to the village for the physician—and you, sir, to your house, to summon your servants—quick—do not hesitate to leave him here. Listen to the persons that now enter the castle—they will watch him as well or better than we can—come, sir, come."

Felix, the priest, and Cushneiche, left the apartment upon the separate errands Mr. Fenelly had specified. On the stairs they met the two old men, come back from a fruitless search after Collum, and already beginning to exclaim against the noise of intruders that had caught their ears. But a few words from the priest silenced them; and, at his command, they hobbled up to afford, perhaps, the last service to their old master.

Cushneiche was the first to return to the castle, with the village physician. He found the apartment in which he had left Collum empty: neither he nor the old men were in it. He concluded that his brother had quickly arrived with the servants, and removed him. The priest reappeared, and took the same opinion. But immediately after, Felix M'Carty came into the room, followed by persons of his household, and disowned the proceeding they had attributed to him. Surprise now seized on all. They called out; the old echoes alone answered them. They went up to Padhre's cell; it was also empty. The servants were dispatched for lights, to explore more minutely.

In the pause a new visitor was heard entering the ruin. It was Redmond. After the scene at Pratt's house, when his stupified thoughts had time to make associations, he concluded, although he had got no convincing view of the features, that the silent visitor could be no other than Padhre-na-Moulh; and, after another lapse of time spent in giving orders for the comforts of Ellen, and of her father, too, he had walked to the castle. For the scene that awaited him in it he was little prepared; and we are as little able to do it justice by a description.

The father and son were roused from each other's embrace by the appearance of the servants with torches. Being briefly made acquainted with the urgent business in hand, Redmond assisted in the search for Collum. The cell above

was again examined; no one appeared. Redmond had the curiosity to try for the secreted box of arms and treasure; to his surprise it was not forthcoming. The ruin contained no other rooms except the ground-floor, which all knew to be blocked up, and which Redmond, from recent experience, was aware could not be approached. Upon a supposition that the old men might have conveyed their charge to one of the adjacent ruins, all were explored, but to no purpose. The grounds immediately about them and near to them underwent a further search. Hours were thus fruitlessly spent; the adjacent cabins were visited, and every inquiry made; and at last, as morning broke, Felix M'Carty, Redmond, the priest, and Cushneiche, retired to Felix's house, leaving the servants to pursue a more minute and extensive investigation, and determined themselves to renew, in a few hours, an inquiry into the matter that so much confounded them.

But before the time of exertion came, a letter was left at the avenue gate, which seemed to forbid as useless further attempts to discover Collum's retreat. It was written by his own hand, as follows:—

"I am not as near death as I believed I was; but were I to live a thousand years, I durst not, injured and excellent brother, think of again seeing your face. I told you as much in the castle, and now repeat my determination. Perhaps it would be the most precious part of my atonement; but I pray to be saved from it. I can undergo anything but that. Farewell for ever! I ask you to visit my mendicant grave. No more. Be not disturbed about my disappearance, or my present fate. I am as well off as I deserve to be. And do not seek after me. Indeed, the search would be as vain to you as afflicting to me. How could you dream of my ever again mixing among men?

"COLLUM."

This letter had not quite the effect of curbing Felix's and Redmond's anxiety to recover their brother and uncle; but still every inquiry proved useless. While Collum's friends knew not what to think, the country-people believed what they liked; and the old rumour, that Padhre-na-Moulh had been watched for the good people by Daddy Clayton and his companion, now readily suggested the consistent story of

his having been at last spirited away to some *rath* in the neighbourhood. Other accounts said, indeed, that this could scarcely be, as, now and then, in the middle of the night, visions of the two aged warders had been seen hobbling through some of their usual haunts.

About a month from this time, the village schoolmaster and schoolmistress gave their urchins a holiday, to witness a rare sight that the afternoon promised. Juan M'Carty and Rosalie D'Arnell were to proceed to church to be married. Mr. Fenelly, early in the morning, had performed the ceremony according to the usage of the Roman Catholic Church, in satisfaction of Rosalie's scruples. The morning following the visit of Collum, Mr. Pratt took his daughter out of the country, leaving Redmond in possession of his house and estate, and also leaving his feelings free with respect to poor Ellen; and, yielding to the youth's ardent entreaties, Felix M'Carty, notwithstanding his uncertainty and affliction about the fate of his brother, agreed, at the end of a month, to bless Redmond with Rosalie's hand.

It was a clear, sunny day, although a cold one; and the village children, unloosed from their tasks, and their little nerves braced with the fine weather, came running and shouting into the lonesome churchyard, through an entrance from the village opposite to that by which the bridal party was expected from the adjacent country. Their little pipes rose high in talk and laughter, and they had engaged in their accustomed frolics over the headstones, when, upon a sudden, they grew silent, and crowded together in a corner, looking fearfully across the churchyard at two well-known old bugbears, Daddy Clayton and his tall helpmate, who appeared silently employed in digging a grave. Their work was nearly done, for they often paused, and placing one hand on the small of the back, as if to relieve themselves from the effect of stooping and delving, and another to their eyes to shade off the sun, looked out in the direction of the road from the old castles, evidently expecting an arrival for which they stood nearly prepared. At last, with many weary groans, and some curses, they threw down their shovels, and sat under a drooping and leafless ash-tree, at the head of the open grave.

"Is it the inches iv him, Daddy, aroon?" inquired Thomaus; "for he's a lenthy corpse."

"Why, how long would you have id?" queried his fellow-

labourer; "duv you think, for as fine a corpse as he makes, that it's your own may-pole of a carcase is to be stretched in id?"

Thomaus, rebuked, was silent.

"I think I sees the boys bringin' him at last," resumed Daddy Clayton, as he again looked out—"an' they 're just in time, sure enough;—for the bride and bridegroom cums on by the other road."

"How the quality 'ill wondher to be stopped in their pleasure, this day," remarked Thomaus.

"Yis, lad," grinned the other; "an' what questions they'll be puttin' us about the place we hid him, when, if they had as much gumption as a blind horse, they ought to rason wid themsefs, an' know we couldn't take him far; or, for the matther o' that (only them great ones are ever an' always thick in the skhull), sure they war behouldin' not to lave the place, at the first goin' off, widout risin' a stone or two from the bottom o' the stairs, any how; an' there they'd have him—an' us along wid him—if that 'ud do 'em any good."

"I'd be sorry they tuck the thought, Daddy; Padhre was so much agin there ever clappin' another eye on him; more betoken' that he gave us the good lob to hide him well."

"Ay, ay, lad, you may say that; the lob he sent us for upstairs, 'ill give us somethin' to lave for a dacent wake an' a dacent berrin."

"The same we giv' himsef, out of it, for as snug and as close as we hid it from them that wasn't iv our own sort," replied Thomaus.

While they spoke, the more regular village sexton walked rapidly in from the village side, his spade and pick-axe on his shoulder, and began to dig a second grave, close by the broad pathway that ran through the churchyard, to the other entrance from the country.

"Here 's more o' the welcome for the quality," said Daddy Clayton, hobbling to the sexton. After some conversation with the man, he returned grinning to his seat under the ash tree, and resumed. "A brave harse, wid white feathers is just come into the village, Thomaus, lad; an' they gave the word to Jacky Spruchan to come off in no time, an' have the lodgin' ready; she's on her thravels from Dublin, we hear, an' left it to her death to lie out here, in the counthry air. Will you b'lieve me agin, whin I tell you the

thruth? Duv you remember my words on the bridge beyant?"

"*Crosh-Chreestha*, is id her, in airnest?" asked Thomaus, in much surprise. They were interrupted by the return of the little boys into the churchyard, at the different entrances, each party heralding two distinct processions. One was the bridal-equipages, friends, and attendants,—a number of village girls, dressed in white, walking two by two, at the side of the carriage which contained Rosalie and her father; the other was a train of ragged mendicants, some supporting, and the rest following the coffin of Collum M'Carty.

The two concourses met and obstructed each other in the middle of the churchyard. Redmond put his head out of his coach to demand the cause of the interruption, and the first thing that struck his eye was the name "Padhrena-Moulh," painted black on the shining plate of the coffin-lid

A few words of explanation, rudely or sneeringly vouchsafed by Daddy Clayton, possessed him and his father of the true state of the case. There was but one course. While the beggars hurried their former brother to his grave, and while Rosalie stopped in her carriage on the broad pathway, Felix M'Carty led his son, in his bridal clothes, to stand by till the coffin was lowered. This took some time: and ere the ceremony was quite over, the hearse of which Daddy Clayton had spoken appeared coming from the village. The person who could have controlled this last interment, when he heard (as soon after his sudden arrival in the village he did) of the different kind of party some of his old friends had formed upon that day, persevered,—half in the indifference and selfishness of grief, half in the bitter hope of causing pain,—in commanding an immediate progress to the churchyard: and his Dublin undertakers, unaffected by local feelings, at once obeyed his orders.

Rosalie's carriage, having stopped by the side of the grave the sexton had dug, was obliged to draw back to give place to the hearse. Redmond and his father came from seeing the last sod laid over Collum, to extricate her out of her new embarrassment. At the first sight of the man who here stood, muffled in a mourning-cloak, at the head of the grave, Redmond started in horror, although scarcely a feature was visible over the high cape of the cloak. He glanced at the

white feathers of the hearse, and grasped his father's arm for support. The Protestant clergyman, compelled into his duty, appeared to discharge his solemn office. The silver-fringed pall was lifted off the coffin, and "Ellen Pratt, aged 17," became legible.

Rosalie caught, as soon as he, the name that smote him with indescribable consternation and sorrow, and, however it affected her, instantly stepped, in her white bridal dress, from her carriage. Tears streamed down her cheeks. She called together the village girls, who had voluntarily come to do honour to her marriage, and some left the churchyard, while the rest stood, two by two, round the hearse, each pair holding between them a white handkerchief, in the usual way in which village and country girls in Ireland attend the burial of a deceased maiden companion. And now it was seen by all, that Rosalie meant they should, for this day, bestow at the grave of her poor rival the honours they had intended for her wedding. The girls she had sent away came back with a garland of the earliest flowers: and she took off her own white ribbons to intersperse the flowers, according to custom, with the bunches they made.

Redmond and she stood hand by hand, until the grave was raised; his father, the villagers, young and old, and the crowd of mendicants, looking on. The garland was placed by Rosalie over Ellen; and it was many months ere the bridal party of that morning returned to the churchyard, to complete the wedding in which they had been so mournfully interrupted.

POSTSCRIPT.

A FRIENDLY critic has pointed out a similarity in the last chapter, between the incident of Collum throwing himself on his knees beside the child in the chapel, and one to be found in the beautiful poem of "Paradise and the Peri." So soon as the critic spoke, we acknowledged the truth of his observation; but not pleading guilty, at the same time, to an intended imitation, and unwilling to deprive the story of an incident that assisted it, we have ventured, with this avowal, to appeal to the indulgence of the reader.

THE FETCHES.

THE FETCHES.

INTRODUCTION.

Letter from Mr. Abel O'Hara to Mr. Barnes O'Hara, Gray's Inn, London.

Inismore, December 4, 1824.

My Dear Barnes,—At last I send you, by a careful friend, my long-promised contribution to our series of Irish Tales; having nothing to say in excuse for my remaining so long behind-hand with it, but that I could not, by possibility, finish sooner. I am at a loss, indeed, to account for my slowness in composition, when I hear of other folk throwing off their twenty or thirty pages of an evening. The five hours, each day and night, for which you stipulated, and which I agreed to, I have faithfully spent in my study: but not to impose on you, I further admit, that scarce more than one hour out of the five was employed in actual writing. I do not know how it is; my general plans and notions come well enough, but the misery lies in torturing my brain to divide them into a succession of incidents and situations. If you had seen me at work, and if your old vivacity has not forsaken you, you would have laughed heartily. I often laughed myself, when I caught in a looking-glass that sometimes stood on the table, the pinched and hard-pressed expression of my naturally sharp visage, and when I called to mind that, for the hour before, I had been leaning back in my old leather-bottomed arm-chair, unconsciously regarding every accidental spot or stain on the ceiling, and biting and nibbling away till "my ould pen was worn to the gristle." Heaven send something has at last come of all this hideous labour.

I have not adopted for my tale any of the popular superstitions you recommended, although you gave me my choice of "the good people, or of our peculiar fraternity of ghosts, or of our still more eccentric sisterhood of witches." You will perceive I have taken leave to decline all these subjects, in preference to one you had overlooked: I mean the Fetch superstition, so prevalent in this part of Ireland. Yet I did not reject the others merely on account of my liking for this one, but as much because I despaired of giving to any of them the effect of which I feel they are, individually, susceptible, and indeed, which the greatest men have tried and failed to give them; and how could I dare, by using other means than those great men had used, attempt my own contemplated and different result?

You will ask what I mean by this half-modest, half-impudent theory, and you will also call on me to yield better satisfaction for my breach of your sovereign commands. I obey, on condition of your extending to me your fraternal indulgence; it is already granted, I know; and here, then, you may peruse in detail my chief reasons, or whims, as, perhaps, you will call them.

The efforts of literary men, even of the highest class, to embody national superstitions, to give them action and scene, have, to me, almost always seemed in a degree abortive. They do not come up to my own preconceived notion of the legend, deposited, heaven knows when or how in my own mind; of the immaterial actor, or the fairy ground, from which such pictures profess to be drawn. They do not, in spite of myself, chill and awe me like the authentic prepossessions of childhood. On the pages of the Fairy Queen, or of the Midsummer Night's Dream, Mab is a different personage from the creature of my established superstition; in fact, I can scarcely separate her from the more palpable dramatis personæ with whom Spenser or Shakspeare has surrounded her. Her limbs are not less corporeal, her language is not more intelligent, her motion is not lighter. I am obliged to look on her body, face, and features; she smiles or frowns, laughs or weeps, like any every-day little lady of my acquaintance. The worthy Bottom, with his bewitched head resting on her real lap, is not a more real individual; nay, the "Welsh Fairy" at Heron's Oak, who could not, the moment he opened his mouth, deceive even the conscience-smitten Jack Falstaff, represents

her as well as she represents my intellectual Mab or Titania. And this I may call disagreeable—distressing to me; the misty quietness of my early dream is by it broken up; the visionary weavings of my brain, from which I own I have derived pleasure, and which, perhaps, most of us love to enjoy in the twilight of the closet, or in a sequestered situation—all is brushed away; and I only see a well-drawn academic group, indifferent to me from the very correctness of their outline, the symmetry of their proportions, and the common reality of their existence.

Ghosts appear to me to have been, if possible, worse treated; I ought to say they have been well drawn, and that would convey all my objection: for I believe they should never have been delineated. I believe the failure to have arisen from the effort to give us fixed ideas of them. We do not want those fixed ideas—I, at least, do not; on the contrary, they are precisely the things to destroy the only true notion I can have of ghosts. For instance, what downright-alive creatures Æneas and Telemachus meet under ground—for it is only under ground; the identical men, using the same feet and hands, with whom they had before held intercourse, dined and supped in—the world. Why, this is but sailing to Van Dieman's Land, or, at best, descending into a mine to visit an old acquaintance. As to stage ghosts, they are my laughter; "enter the ghost Banquo!"—the very sound of the words unghost the third-rate actor before he comes in. In fact, since the first existence of the literary world, and throughout its whole range, it has only thrice been visited by your true legitimate spectre. One appeared to Eliphaz the comforter, in the land of Uz; the second, to the mad author of Ossian's poems; and the third is the Bodach-Glas of poor Vich Ian Vhor. You will immediately recollect each of these, therefore I need not quote any of them; but I must call on you to observe, that all are fascinating and sublime, because they are sketches only, loose and general as our own nursery ideas of what such beings are and ought to be. In them, person or materiality is not even indicated; they exist we know not how: they come and go, we know not whence or whither; they are and they are not.

Although the depicting of witches does not require the same beautiful indistinctness of execution, and although we

do not contemplate them as immaterial creatures, yet I have been also inconvenienced by the violence done on my primitive notion of witches. I cannot, perhaps, readily express the reason why; but let me endeavour to illustrate. Otway's famous witch only disgusts—she does not control nor agitate me: she is a feeble, squalid old woman, to whom I could fearlessly walk up, in the most elfish solitude, and give an alms. Macbeth, too, seems to me a silly person to be at first so much moved by the weird sisters; they are mere animals, and of the very poorest class of animals; one could coolly hand them over to the parish beadle and see them put to hard labour. But this I could not do with the weird sisterhood of my own imagination, whom, though they wear a fashion of the human form, I have been taught to regard as possessing a portion of superhuman spirit and existence; and while wandering in silent deserted places, among the cowering loneliness of deep hills and forests, I confess I have often felt that I should have instinctively shrunk from the sudden vision of an ancient gentlewoman, shaped, featured, and habited, out of the picture gallery and wardrobe of my childish prejudices, which, after all, give the only sovereign impressions of supernatural appearances and agents that it is the poet's business to copy and reproduce before us.

With those views I declined, for the present at least, your suggestion to mould out of ghost, fairy, or witch, my Irish tale; because, as I before said, I would not presume to try, with any one of them, for an effect different from the effects already relied on by great and immortal hands, and, still worse for me, accepted by the world; and to imitate where I disapproved seemed only a cold and repulsive task. But this leads me to the more direct object of my letter, as I rather write to acquaint you, my dear Barnes, of some circumstances that, while I wavered and was uneasy for a new subject, caused me to select that which is at length before you:

I was sauntering in hot summer weather by a little stream that now scarcely strayed over its deep and rocky bed, often obliged to glance and twine round some large stone or the trunk of a fallen tree, as if exerting a kind of animated ingenuity to escape and pursue its course. It ran through a valley, receding in almost uniform perspective as far as the eye could reach, and shut up at its extremity by a lofty hill,

sweeping directly across it. The sides of the valley bore no traces of cultivation. Briers and furze scantily clothed them; while, here and there, a frittered rock protruded his bald forehead through the thin copse. Ponderous stones, rounded or polished by the winter impetuosity of the now trickling streamlet, lay hurled along its mountain course in different shapes and irregular grouping. No shadow broke or relieved the monotonous sheet of light that spread over every object. The spare grass and wild bushes had become parched under its influence; the earth, wherever it was seen bare, appeared dry and crumbling into dust; the rocks and stones were partially bleached white, or their few patches of moss burnt black or deep red.

Up the valley, far as my eye could travel, and at last over the broad bosom of the distant hill, which seemed torn and indented with the headlong torrent it had once poured down, far and uniform on every side a vertical July sun was shining. The whole effect was fiercely brilliant, and so unbroken, that a sparrow could not have hopped, or a grass-mouse raced across, even in the distance, without being immediately detected as an intrusion upon the scene; as a sudden speck with which nothing else must have held any relation or keeping.

The desertion and silence of the place sympathized well with its lethargic features: the peasant seemed to have shunned it—(no theory is, you know, forbidden to the rapt vision)—as haunted or unholy ground. Not a single cabin met my eye through the range of the valley; overhead, indeed, the gables of one or two peeped down, half hidden by their sameness of colour with the weather-tanned rocks on which they hung, or with the heather that thatched them; but they and their inmates were obviously unconnected with the solitude in which I stood, their fronts and windows being turned towards the level country, and thence the paths that led to them must also have diverged. No moving thing animated my now almost supernatural picture; no cow, horse, or sheep, saunteringly grazed along the margin of my wizard stream. The very little birds flew over it, I conveniently thought, with an agitated rapidity, or, if one of them alighted on a shrivelled spray, it was but to look round for a moment with a keen mistrustful eye, and then bound into his fields of air, leaving the wild branch slightly fluttered by

his action. If a sound arose, it was but what its own whispering waters made; or the herdsboy's whistle faintly echoed from far off fields and meadows; or the hoarse and lonesome caw of the rook, as he winged his heavy flight towards more fertile places.

Amid all this light and silence, a very aged woman, wildly habited, appeared, I know not how, before me. Her approach had not been heralded by any accompanying noise, by any rustle among the bushes, or by the sound of a footstep; my eyes were turned from the direction in which she became visible, but, again unconsciously recurring to it, fixed on the startling figure.

She was low in stature, emaciated, and embrowned by age, sun, or toil, as it might be; her lank, white hair hung thickly at either side of her face; a short red mantle fell loosely to her knees; under it a green petticoat descended to within some inches of her ankles; and her arms, neck, head and feet, were bare. There she remained, at the distance of only about twenty yards, her small grey eyes vacantly set on mine; and her brows strenuously knit, but, as I thought, rather to shadow her sight from the sun, than with any expression of anger or agitation. Her look had no meaning in it; no passion, no object. It communicated nothing with which my heart or thought held any sympathy; yet it was long, and deep, and unwincing. After standing for some time, as if spell-bound by her gaze, I felt conscious of becoming uneasy and superstitious in spite of myself; yet my sensation was rather caused by excitement than by fear, and, saluting the strange visitant, I advanced towards her. She stood on a broad slab in the centre of the bed of the stream, but which was now uncovered by the water. I had to step from stone to stone in my approach, and often wind round some unusually gigantic rock, that impeded my direct course; one of them was, indeed, so large that, when I came up to it, my view of the old woman was completely impeded. This roused me more; I hastily turned the angle of the impediment; looked again for her in the place where she had stood—but she was gone. My eye rapidly glanced round to detect the path she had taken. I could not see her.

Now I became more disturbed. I leaned my back against the rock, and for some moments gazed along the valley. In this situation, my eye was again challenged by her scarlet mantle

glittering in the sunlight, at a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile from the spot where she first appeared. She was once more motionless, and evidently looking at me. I grew too nervous to remain stationary, and hurried after her up the stony bed of the stream.

A second time she disappeared; but, when I gained her second resting-place, I saw her standing on the outline of the distant mountain, now dwindled almost to the size of a crow, yet boldly relieved against the background of white clouds, and still manifested to me by her bright red mantle. A moment, and she finally evaded my view, going off at the other side of the mountain. This was not to be borne: I followed, if not courageously, determinedly. By my watch, to which I had the curiosity and presence of mind to refer, it took me a quarter of an hour to win the summit of the hill; and she, an aged woman, feeble and worn, had traversed the same space in much less time. I have since supposed the circumstance might be owing to my ignorance of some clear and unobstructed path, of which she had availed herself. However this may be, when I stood on the ridge of the hill, and looked abroad over a widely-spreading country, unsheltered by forest, thicket, or any other hiding-place, I beheld her not.

Cabins, or, to use the more poetical name authorized by the exquisite bard of "O'Connor's child," sheelings were now abundantly strewed around me, and men, women, and children, at work in the fields. I concluded, they, at least, must have tracked her, and proceeded to make inquiries of them; but one and all they assured me no such person had, that day, met their notice, and added, indeed, it was impossible she could have crossed where I asserted she did cross, without becoming visible to them. Then I went into the cabins, and tired myself to no purpose with other inquiries. I never again beheld (excepting in my dreams) that mysterious visitant, nor have ever been able to ascertain who or what she was. Meantime I believe what I like about her; and leaving you also to exercise your discretion, I shall proceed to mention—while, at the same time, I forward the purpose of my letter—the only opinion, apart from my own, that has since reached me on the subject.

After having spoken to the peasants, I continued my walk, descending the breast of the mountain which faced the

valley, but now avoiding the latter, and sauntering against the thready current of the stream, with no other feeling that I can recollect, but an impatience to ascertain its hidden source. It led me all round the base of the hill. I had a book in my pocket, with which I occasionally sat down, in an inviting solitude; when tired of it, I threw pebbles into the water, or traced outlines on the clouds; and the day insensibly lapsed, while I thus rioted in the utter listlessness of, perhaps, a diseased imagination. I thought of ghosts, witches, and apparitions, of every class and name. I wished for their appearance, and had courage enough, in anticipation, to commune with them, if they would only become visible. I called; but, to the discomfiture of a more potent challenger, Hotspur has, long ago, proved that any one may "call."

Evening fell. I found myself, in its deepest shades, once more on the side of the mountain opposite that which turned towards the valley. I sat upon a small knoll, surrounded by curves and bumps, wild and picturesque in their solitude. The dark green furze bush spread a sombre mantle down to the foot of the knoll, and the party-coloured patches of vegetation, which in daylight had beautifully chequered the prospect around me, were now almost entirely blent up with the tintless expanse. I was listening to the shrill call of the plover, which sounded far and faint along the dreary hills, when a vivid glow of lightning, followed by a clattering thunder-crash, roused me from my reverie; the big, heavy drops were already beginning to fall; I ascended the mountain's side, studiously bent on getting home time enough to evade the storm; but had not reached the ridge, when it became too unreasonable for farther opposition, so I was glad to take shelter in one of the cabins, which I have described as rather numerously strewed in that direction.

The poor people—the dwellers therein—received me with an Irish *cead mille faultha*—a hundred thousand welcomes—and I soon sat in comfort by a blazing turf fire, with eggs, butter, and oaten bread, to serve my need as they might.

The family consisted of an old couple, joint proprietors of my house of refuge; a son and daughter, nearly full grown; and a pale, melancholy-looking girl of about twenty years of age, whom I afterwards understood to be niece to the old man, and, since her father's death, under his protection. From my continued inquiries concerning my witch of the glen, our

conversation turned on superstitions generally. With respect to the ancient lady herself, the first opinion seemed to be—"the Lord only knows what she was;" but a neighbour coming in, and reporting the sudden illness of old Grace Morrissy who inhabited a lone cabin on the edge of the hill, my anecdote instantly occurred to the auditory, one and all; and now, with alarmed and questioning eyes, fixed on each other, they concluded I had seen her "Fetch;" and determined amongst themselves that she was to die before morning.

"The Fetch" was not entirely new to me, but I had never before been afforded so good an opportunity of becoming acquainted with its exact nature and extent among the Irish peasantry. I asked questions, therefore, and gathered some, to me, valuable information.

In Ireland, a fetch is the supernatural fac-simile of some individual, which comes to insure to its original a happy longevity, or immediate dissolution; if seen in the morning, the one event is predicted; if in the evening, the other.

During the course of my questions, and of the tales and remarks to which they gave rise, I could observe that the pale, silent girl, listened to all that was said with a deep, assenting interest; or, sighing profoundly, contributed only a few melancholy words of confirmation. Once when she sighed, the old man remarked—"No blame to you, Moggy mavourneen, fur it's you that lives to know it well, God help you this blessed night." To these words she replied with another long-drawn aspiration, a look upwards, and an agitation of feature, which roused my curiosity, if not my sympathy in no ordinary degree. I hazarded queries, shaped with as much delicacy as I could, and soon learned that she had seen, before his death, the fetch of her beloved father. The poor girl was prevailed on to tell her own story, in substance as follows:—

Her father had, for some days, been ill of a fever. On a particular evening, during his illness, she had to visit the house of an acquaintance at a little distance, and, for this purpose, chose a short cut across some fields. Scarcely arrived at the stile that led from the first into the second field, she happened to look back, and beheld the figure of her father rapidly advancing in her footsteps. The girl's fear was, at first, only human; she imagined that, in a paroxysm, her father had broken from those who watched his feverish bed; but, as she

gazed, a consciousness crept through her, and the action of the vision served to heighten her dread. It shook its head and hand at her in an unnatural manner, as if commanding her to hasten on. She did so. On gaining the second stile, at the limit of the second field, she again summoned courage to look behind, and again saw the apparition standing on the first stile she had crossed, and repeating to her its compulsory gesticulations. Now she ran wildly to the cottage of her friend, and only gained the threshold when she fainted. Having recovered and related what she had seen, a strong party accompanied her by a winding way back to her father's house; for they dared not take that one by which she had come. When they arrived, the old man was a corpse; and, as her mother had watched the death-struggle during the girl's short absence, there could be no question of his not having left his bed in the interim.

The man who had come in to us, and whom my humble host called "gossip," now took up the conversation, and related, with mystery and pathos, the appearance, to himself, of the fetch of an only child. He was a widower, though a young man, and he wept during the recital. I took a note of his simple narrative, nearly in his own words; and a rhyming friend of yours and mine has since translated them into metre. As I think the verses read better than my own poor prose, I here subjoin them:—

The mother died when the child was born,
And left me her dear baby to keep;
I rocked its cradle the night and morn,
Or, silent, hung o'er it to weep.

'Twas a sickly child through its infancy,
Its cheeks were so ashy pale;
Till it broke from my arms to walk in glee,
Out in the sharp fresh gale.

And then my little girl grew strong,
And laughed the hours away;
Or sung me the merry lark's mountain song,
Which he taught her at break of day.

When she wreathed her hair in thicket bowers,
With the hedge-rose and hare-bell blue;
I called her my May, in her crown of flowers,
And her smile so soft and new.

And the rose, I thought, never shamed her cheek,
But rosy, and rosier made it;
And her eye of blue did more brightly break
Through the blue-bell that strove to shade it.

One evening I left her asleep in her smiles,
And walked through the mountains, lonely;
I was far from my darling, ah! many long miles,
And I thought of her and her only.

She darkened my path like a troubled dream,
In that solitude far and drear;
I spoke to my child! but she did not seem
To hearken with human ear;

She only looked with a dead, dead eye,
And a wan, wan cheek of sorrow—
I knew her Fetch! she was called to die,
And she died upon the morrow.

After the adventures and anecdotes of this day and evening, you may believe I comforted myself with having found, what I had long sought, a subject for my tale; and, while turning the matter over in my mind, chance still more befriended me. You recollect the celebrated Doctor Butler, of whom we have, in our childhood, heard so many traditionary wonders, and who, on the faith of the old ladies of this our native place, was assuredly endowed with skill superior to any living Sangrado; I suppose that almost the first, if not the very first regular practitioner in so small a town, and in the primitive times, might well attract such admiration, and, indeed, nearly superstitious homage. Well, speaking of my fetch anecdotes to a lineal descendant, by the female branch, of this gentleman, the lady recollected some papers, professing to be in his handwriting, that contained notes of a true and real fetch history, the actors in which were known to the good doctor. At my earnest entreaty, and after wading, "with spectacles on nose," three or four days, through old chests, choke full of old papers and other trumpery, my excellent acquaintance presented me with those notes, and the result is before you. Of course I have used my discretion with the materials thus submitted to me; still, however, the leading incidents pretend to the authority of Doctor Butler, whom, by the way, you will meet as a principal actor in the scenes he has, himself, called into existence.

And now adieu. Shall we really see you at Easter? I am desired by all at home to ask that question, and to add that your old seat, at your old corner of the table, shall, with anxious expectation, be placed for you. The green spectacles you recommended me to get, during the slow progress of this tale, I found of considerable use; do you adopt them yourself?—Farewell, my dear Barnes, and believe me, in true affection,

Your brother,

ABEL O'HARA.

CHAPTER I.

KILKENNY College was the most famous as well as the most ancient preparatory school of Ireland. It commenced as an appendage to the magnificent cathedral of St. Canice, for the preservation of which, after Cromwell's spoliation, we are indebted to the classic Pococke, and was then situated, according to Stanihurst, "in the weste of the church-yard" of that edifice, and had for its founder Pierce or Peter Butler, Earl of Ormond and Ossory. And "out of this schoole," continued Stanihurst, "have sprouted such proper impes, through the painful diligence and laboursome industre of that famous lettered man, Mr. Peter White, as generally the whole weale publicke of Ireland, and especially the southern parts of that island, are greatly thereby furthered." We have a sure clue to the date of its first erection, by the same writer mentioning that fact as "of late;" and also by his proceeding to inform us that (under Mr. Peter White, the original master) "it was my happie hap (God and my parents be thanked) to have been one of his crue; and I take it to stande with my dutie, sith I may not stretch mine abilitie in requiting his good turns, yet to manifest my good will in remembering his pains. And certes I will acknowledge myself so much bound, and beholden to him and his, as for his sake, I reverence the meanest stone cemented in the walls of that famous schoole."

In 1684, the first Duke of Ormond, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, granted a new Charter to Kilkenny College, vest-

ing in himself and his heirs male the appointment of masters, and the office and dignity of patrons and governors of the establishment. The statutes passed by him on this occasion, no less than twenty-five in number, are each of formidable length, regulating everything, from the master's morals, religion, and salary, to the punishment to be inflicted upon an urchin for "cutting or defacing the desks or forms, walls or windows of the school." Under this new arrangement the college also changed its situation from "the weste of the church-yard" of St. Canice, to a large building at the other extremity of the town of Kilkenny, which, together with a fine park, and the rectories and tithes of several parishes, near and distant, the patron granted, in trust, for its uses and advantage.

But during the short and inauspicious Irish reign of James II. that soon after ensued, this endowment was frustrated. The first master, appointed by the Duke of Ormond, fled on account of his politics; and "King James," says Harris, "by charter dated the 21st of February, 1689, upon the ruins of this school erected and endowed a royal college, consisting of a rector, eight professors, and two scholars in the name of more; to be called the Royal College of St. Canice, Kilkenny, of the foundation of King James;" and then followed "Articles conclus du consentement unanime des regents des ecoles de Kilkenny, sous le protection de l'illustrisseme et reverendissime l'evesque d'Ossory," as curious, at least, as the state laws previously passed for the same establishment under hand and seal of the representative of majesty. William triumphed, however, James sought the retirement of Saint Germains, Ireland once more rested beneath the reflux of Protestantism, and Kilkenny College, in common with every other public institution, reassumed its Protestant charter and arrangement, and to this day continues to enjoy both, with, we should perhaps mention, only one difference from the whole economy proposed by the first Duke of Ormond; and that is, remarkably enough, a lapse of the right of presentation to the school by the Ormond family, in consequence of the attainder of the duke in 1715, and the vesture of said right in the provost and fellows of Trinity, Dublin.

It has been seen that Stanihurst was a "proper imp" of the old establishment; Harris, by his own acknowledgment too, was also educated in Kilkenny College, under the first master

nominated by the Duke of Ormond; as also were, subsequently, Thomas Prior, George Berkely, Bishop of Cloyne, and other celebrated characters, among whom, if our recollection does not fail us, we believe we may rank Swift. In fact, it was after its return to the hands of Protestant masters and governors that this seminary rose to the height of its fame, and that young Irish noblemen and gentlemen crowded its classes for the most approved preparation for university honours. It might be called the then Eton of the sister country.

We find it necessary to observe that the building to which the title "College of Kilkenny" now applies is not the same endowed by the Duke of Ormond. The Irish tourist is at present shown, from an opposits bank of the Nore, a large, square, modern house, three storeys high, dashed or plastered, and flaunting with gay and ample windows, and this, he is informed, is the college. Turning its back, in suitable abstraction, upon the hum and bustle of the small though populous city, it faces towards the green country, an extensive lawn spreading before it, and the placid river running hard by, and is, altogether, appropriately and beautifully situated. But the original edifice, that existed at the time of our story, was pushed farther back, faced to the street of the town, and was a gray reverend pile of irregular and rather straggling design, or we should perhaps say, of no design at all; having, partly, a monastic physiognomy, and partly that of a dwelling-house, and bearing, to its present gay successor, about the same likeness that the levee skirts of Anne's time bear to the smart swallowtail of the last summer but one. We surmise that, at a more remote period, it belonged to the old and beautiful Augustinian Abbey of St. John, from which the main building was not more than three hundred yards distant, and which was richly endowed "for the salvation of his soul, and those of his predecessors and successors" (as Ledwich abstracts its charter) by William Marshall the elder, Earl of Pembroke, in 1220. The entrance to the school-room was immediately from the street, through huge oak folding doors, arching at top, to suit the arched stone doorway, and gained by two grand flights of steps at each side, that formed a spacious platform before the entrance, and allowed under them a passage by which visitors approached the college. To the left was another gateway, where carriages had egress. The whole

front of the building was of cut stone, with Gothic windows composed of numerous small panes of glass, separately leaded, and each of diamond form ; giving the appearance of a side or back rather than of a front, on account of its grotesque gables, chimneys, and spouts, the last of which jetted into the street, to the no small annoyance, in rainy weather, of the neighbours and the passengers ; while, from the platform before the school-room entrance, the lads of the college contrived, in all weathers, further annoyances of every description.

But in the past, as well as the present time, the lawn of the college was devoted to the exercise and sports of the students, and had, for its left-hand boundary, "the dark walk," a shrubbery, so called to this day, though its appearance, and indeed identity, are changed, and for its right the crystal Nore, of which the opposite banks were flanked by a wall some forty feet high ; and over this wall—its foundations on a level with the top—towered in uncouth grandeur, amid throngs of luxuriant trees, the old family castle of the all but regal Ormonds. Close by the dark walk, at the left of the lawn, there ran, too, as there at present runs, an artificial, but deep, rapid, and sufficiently broad stream, conjectured to have been an aqueduct formed by the old monks of St. John's Abbey, that, while it discharged its immediate agency of setting in motion the water-wheels of more than one grist-mill on its course, served, at the same time, to cut off the college grounds from the adjacent gardens of the poorer class of people who inhabited the near outlet.

If local fame errs not, however, neither the broad Nore, nor the mill-stream, nor yet the high front wall that ran from the side of the college to the brink of the latter, completely succeeded in keeping within proper bounds, at improper hours, the mettlesome race of young students, that, in the old time, frequented Kilkenny College. Stories are whispered on the spot of stolen orgies at midnight, in confidential taverns through the town ; of ardent breathings at the windows of not the ugliest lasses in the suburbs ; of desperate wars between the native youth and the fiery sojourners ; and all the et ceteras that spring from proximity to a small town of such an establishment, and which Harrow at this day might illustrate.

Some time after the final re-establishment of this college,

under the charter of the Duke of Ormond, a young gentleman of the name of Tresham, the descendant of an English family settled in the South of Ireland, came to spend a few months at it, previous to his entrance into the Dublin University. His age was scarcely eighteen; yet, though so young, he had visited London, and some of the best parts of the continent, acquiring, wherever he travelled, literary friends and information alone; for his mind had early taken a studious, or rather inquisitive bent, and imbibed with avidity all the novel scientific systems prevalent among the learned of the world.

Hitherto Tresham's education had been neglected, as, perhaps, is the case with most young persons of genius; he had read the classics a little; rudimental science a little; and, in this unprepared state, the crude metaphysics of the time most of all. But some grave and influential friends having pointed out the necessity of regular acquirement, Tresham determined to amend his course, and posted to Kilkenny to recal his dead-letter Greek and Latin, and be, for six months, nothing but a classical student. The resolution was kept so far as related to his actual use of books; but his imagination still wandered through the regions in which it had long rioted; so that, while his bodily eye hypocritically dwelt with Homer or Tacitus, its mental brother shifted, in no definable investigation, through a wilderness of abstract reverie.

The winter came and went; Tresham's few months for preparatory study were over, yet he was still a devoted classical student at the college of Kilkenny. But winter came and went in the company of a fair and new friend, and Tresham was happier than Greek or Latin could make him. And now, and more than ever, his philosophic visions crowded upon him. The idleness produced by love was a favourable season for their influence, and they thronged in their power and fascinations. He had twice been refused admission into the head class of the college; but a beloved object had not refused him admission into her heart; and, the classics forgotten, he enjoyed the most delicious life that youth, fancy, love, and system-making can impart to an enthusiast. Universality of essence was Tresham's darling speculation. At times he became anxious to deny himself, even unto himself, and would have preferred a demonstration of his "inherency" in a wild flower or a weed, to one clearly proving his distinct identity.

So he loved and philosophized, sighed and mused; every blade of grass in the college park, every leaf on every tree in its shrubberies, and every smile and pout of his mistress, supplying endless subject.

During the long winter's evenings that had passed, and the long summer walks that were in season, Tresham failed not to tincture, from the illusions of his own mind, all his conversations with his young mistress; and, with such topics as we have glanced at, he occasionally mixed up the still wilder phantasies of Rosycrucianism, which had not as yet withdrawn its spell from the imaginations of even the accomplished portion of society. On this topic, Tresham was scarcely intelligible to his fair pupil, yet whose almost childish thoughts, fretted with the common superstitions of her own country, were fearfully pleased to meet, under the borrowed name of philosophy, a downright system suited to her wildest daydreams; and she listened in awe and terror that admitted everything. But of this young lady's state of mind, in consequence of her intercourse with Tresham, we may refer to the opinions of a close and affectionate observer.

At the time of his arrival in Kilkenny, the family of Ruth or Rothe was, throughout its various branches, one of the most considerable of the town or vicinity. A branch with which we are interested, consisted of Mr. Ruth, a gentleman advanced in years, his lady, and three daughters, of whom the eldest was nineteen, the second fifteen, and the third, a child of ten or eleven. They had many connexions of every age, who often visited them, and all formed a happy family circle round the fire of a winter's night, or while they watched the rising moon in the twilight of a soft summer evening.

For a year previous to Tresham's appearance at the college, the eldest girl, Maria, had been attached to a young military gentleman, who, however, was absent at that period, and absent in peril, too, on service with his regiment in America. Months rolled away, and he was still in a foreign country; but Maria received letters from her lover, full of high spirits, that told her of good health, and exemption from all the ghastly visitations her fancy and affection had strewn in his path; and at last came the news of peace, if not of victory, with another letter, giving promise of meeting on a certain day, nay, at a certain hour, which promise was to the day and hour, kept.

The usual scene of lover's welcome over, Mortimer inquired after the health of Mr. and Mrs. Ruth, and of—as he called her—"his dear little sighing sister, Anna."

"Father and mother well, and Anna better and worse than when you left us," Maria answered.

"Better and worse!"

"Yes; for, first, she has the useless thing she so long sighed for."

"A lover, I suppose?"

"Indeed; and therein is Anna better, is she not?"

"I am bound to believe so; but worse?"

"In the kind of lover."

"Is he unworthy? is he base? who is he?"

"Neither base nor unworthy; and for whom and what he is, believe him a youth well born, handsome (very handsome, Mortimer), affluent, honourable, and amiable. His father and ours were old friends, in the old times; here he came to study at our college, bringing letters to us from his father, was cordially received, and became a constant visitor."

"But, Maria, you describe a gentleman, and in words that give a strange sound to your first objection, if indeed, you make any, against such a lover for our sister."

"I will go on in my own way. The boy came, I say; Anna Ruth was young, beautiful, and romantic; Harry Tresham was also young, also handsome, and also romantic; and so—in short, they did what you and I did."

"Fell in love with each other?"

"Yes."

"Well, Maria? Anna is little the worse for that, I suppose. Is the difficulty in your father's opinion?"

"No. Our father saw no difficulty if his old friend saw none; Tresham wrote home to ask; a favourable letter came, permitting everything, provided that Harry's love did not interfere with his classics; this our good and prudent sire took upon himself to regulate; and so, almost ever since you went away, the student has been received among us, saying and doing all you used to say and do; and, in fact, filling up your old place completely."

"And to the satisfaction of every party? Well, well, Maria, it has been fortunate for me, I see, that this pale student had eyes for the black tresses and pensive brow of one sister, rather than for the yellow ringlets and red-and-

white commonplace of the other. But still I am unable to see the harm to Anna."

"For the first, first; be assured we never missed you. Harm, did you say? I do not know what to call it; nor, seriously, can I tell you all I mean. But, before everything else, Tresham is a deep reader, and an exceeding visionary."

"Oh—a book architect? a builder up and puller-down of worlds?"

"Superstitious, moping, and melancholy——"

"What!—a Rosycrucian, in good earnest? a soothsayer and ghost-seeker?"

"Something of all that, I fear. Born in the wildest part of our country, and having spent a sickly and solitary boyhood among its highest mountains and deepest forests, and constant fellowship with the uncultured peasantry, he travelled to the continent, ill prepared to resist the infatuations you speak of; then his stolen studies here do not make him wiser; all his resolutions to hold to one course of reading have lately given way, and he plunges deeper than ever into the most approved metaphysics. You smile, sir—is it not the word? I am sure 'tis the one himself taught me—and he affects to gain from them much help in his wildest notions."

"I now understand your fears, Maria, and share them. I am very sorry for this. Your sister Anna was, of all creatures, most likely to be injured by society such as his, and topics, such as they chatter on, together; and if she indeed loves Tresham——"

"Oh! she dearly loves him; with all a pure girl's first love; and most, I believe, for the sake of his theories. I have seen them talk together of shades and shadows, and of the world of shadows, until their voices sank into mistrusting whispers, and you could hear their hearts beating in the echo of the fear they had made contagious to one another."

"Absurdity! we shall speak with this boy, and laugh him into manhood."

"Then you may soon begin—see!" Maria continued, leading Mortimer to a window, and pointing out—"yonder they walk, together; and now they have been moping through that dark shrubbery I cannot tell how long, feeding on the deepest philosophy, or the most frightful and abominable nursery tales."

"And," said Mortimer, "are still absorbed; Tresham in

narrating and expounding, and Anna in listening and wondering. At this first look he seems an interesting youth; and something, I know not what, strangely fixes my attention to him."

"My poor Anny, how like a cheated child she looks!" Maria went on, smiling through sudden tears of sisterly affection.

"And this, I think," resumed Mortimer, "may be a lecture on universal essence, as the puzzlers call it, rather than a ghost story; for, see, Maria, overcome by a confused notion of all he says, the little girl now looks as if she doubted the very presence of her lover, and ventures her blushing cheek to his, as if to reassure herself of his undiminished identity."

"Yes—and Tresham now disproves all her doubts."

"How?—I do not see how."

"Why, with—a kiss," Maria answered, laughing, and blushing too, as she glanced at her lover.

"The clever fellow! to teach me how to prove I am by your side!" said Mortimer, giving the same demonstration to his mistress: "but they disappear before I can view him closer, and now, I suppose, approach the house by that turning."

"Yes, thou practical philosopher: and, Mortimer, you shall love our Harry Tresham, who, with all his whims, is a boy of much promise."

CHAPTER II.

Arm in arm, Tresham and Anna entered the room a few minutes after. Without much of what is called the glow of health on the cheeks of either, this young couple awakened, at first sight, much interest; more, perhaps, or of a keener kind, than we feel at the view of voluptuous cheeks and laughing eyes, and all the picture of mountain health, youth, and beauty; though that, too, is so wonderful and delightful, and a sight to praise the God of nature for.

Early and habitual thought, and, for the whole theory of mind and existence, a reverential wonder of soul, had fixed

in intense, though not disagreeable paleness, their naturally pale complexions ; it was the nameless hue, rich without a tint of colour, of enthusiasm and genius. They were like each other. Their foreheads were marble white, high and broad, clear and calm, and unsullied by a line or curl of grief or bad passion ; clouds of dark hair gathered round their brows ; and those well-defined brows lay, on the snow of their foreheads, in the repose of power and character. So far were they like ; but, while their eyes were also of one deep hazel colour, Tresham's had a more assured expression than his mistress's ; his look evinced more satisfaction, more dependence on himself for all he thought and felt ; her's sombred or flashed in the reveries or efforts of a novel excitement, and as if in a seeking and asking way to her lover. His lips were usually closed, though not compressed ; hers, of beautiful form, and richly red and moist, as usually remained apart ; unfolding themselves in a continued question, as it were, or, as if impatient of some anticipated or half-conceived idea.

Both handsome, and in their very spring of life, their features, figures, and mien, showed all that a statuary might seek for the chaste expression of that blent character ; yet the girl, though nearly three years younger than her lover, approached nearer to perfect form ; she wore her first firm roundness of womanly charms and fascination, while he was not, proportionately, square and muscular—in fact, so manly.

Young in their blossom of youth, of mind and body, of heart and passion ; good, pure, gifted, and loving, trusting, and happy, in each other ; arm and arm, and their thoughts and eyes still glowing with the topic they had been engaged in,—lovelily did they now enter the presence of Maria and her friend ! In this first and happiest time of power to bless and to be blest, why does the backwardness of reason, or the frown of the world, forbid the interchange of such affection ? We plead not for ourselves, for, alas ! we have passed out of the fairy circle of youth, even while it was drawn around us ; enthusiasm, love, the shrined image of beauty, and the dream, so much better than the reality of happiness, have departed from us : with locks scarce silvered, we tread, by necessitous anticipation, the crisped paths of old age ; all that youth was, or is, or may be, we think of, as of

a sound half forgotten and never fully distinguished; no, we plead not for ourselves. But for the fair, the freshly young, and the joyous and generous of our species, may we not ask, why should enjoyment entail bitterness, and yielding to their own pure hearts be a curse, and this beautiful earth be not enjoyed, but dreaded like the walls of a prison, or the voice of a keeper? It is so, it must be so; but why should it be right?

Anna entering suddenly, and without knowing that Mortimer had arrived, almost screamed out when she saw him, and with a—"Mortimer! our dear brother, welcome!"—ran to him and offered her cheek, now rapt in the warm blush, that told of its having just come from the heart.

But Mortimer, not content with the permitted favour, inflicted a soldier's salutation on the very lips of his fair sister: and—

"Are *you* quite as well and happy as when I left you, my sad philosopher?" he whispered, motioning his head, though without looking, towards Tresham:—"what!—this our Anna? and where is the shadow of a girl I left behind me?—why, child, you were then of no more meaning or consistency than a long-drawn sigh; a thread-paper stuffed with sighs, might have stood for you; and now comes out a divine and awful creature of flesh and blood! a little earthly divinity,—and gainsay it who dares!" and he repeated his freedom, making it a case of necessity that Anna should now frown a little, as, by a rapid glance, such as women only know how to give, she saw Tresham's eye kindling.

"Captain Mortimer, you shall bow and apologize for this to our new brother, Mr. Tresham," said Maria, advancing with Tresham by the hand.

"I shall be proud of your friendship, sir," Mortimer began, also advancing; but he had not taken many steps when he suddenly started back, and with a slight contraction of brow, and distention of eye, stared in silence on Tresham.

The student returned his stare in utter astonishment, that soon began to change into displeasure; Maria looked on, in amazement, too; Anna in terror; she grew deadly pale, and drawing Maria aside—"Good God, sister!"—she whispered—"what is the matter with him? Why does he look so on Harry?—They never met before—it is impossible!"

Maria's answer was interrupted by Mortimer, who, recovering himself, walked fully up to Tresham, and holding out his hand, said—"Excuse me, Mr. Tresham; but—I—I was struck with your likeness to a person I before saw—in fact—an old friend—we should be brothers, sir."

"It shall be my study to merit the name, Captain Mortimer;" and Tresham gave his hand, but, to a nice observer, not perfectly satisfied with Mortimer's explanation. The gentlemen conversed, however, freely together.

"You have heard him account for it, my love," Maria now answered, still in an aside to Anna—"for heaven's sake what could you think?—do not, dearest Anna, allow every common occurrence to fret and disturb you."

"You will charitably excuse, brother Tresham, my want of ceremony with our sweet sister, here," Mortimer went on: "I know it is not to be learned from books; but, after the camp and the march, and all the rest, you have no idea how a poor fellow's heart opens to his fellow-creatures; how it thirsts and hungers after any one that loves it! and I know I am a brother to Anna," he continued, now gently taking her hand like a brother indeed.

This speech brought him off well, and the young party passed some delightful time together, until Mortimer, with many regrets, mentioned a necessity for keeping an appointment on particular business, which, he said, must deprive him even of the pleasure of returning to his friends that night. All heard this with expressions of sorrow, and, after he had taken leave of Tresham in a friendly manner, Mortimer retired, accompanied to the door by Maria.

Anna and Tresham stood for some time silent, both engaged, perhaps, with the same thought; but of the two Anna seemed most agitated. At last, as if starting from the inward touch of something very disagreeable, she laid her hand on Tresham's arm, and, looking down, pronounced his name.

"My love?" Tresham said, abruptly too, and in an anxious tone and gesture.

"You noticed Mortimer's start when he saw you?" Anna asked.

"Why—scarcely—yet I noticed it," Tresham replied, willing to relieve the distress he saw his mistress feel, but from which he was not, himself, free.

"Could you have ever met before?" she resumed, fixing her bright, mysterious eye on his.

"To my mind, no; excepting, perhaps, in the awful interchanges of dreams, which, I believe, I have satisfactorily unveiled to you."

"But he explained it," Anna continued, afraid of, rather than satisfied with, the entangling solution of her lover, and eagerly adopting a more homely one, "did he not?"

"He did;" replied Tresham, but with little earnestness.

"Satisfactorily, you think?" urged Anna.

"Why, perhaps so." Another pause, again broken by Anna, ensued.

"Tresham—that superstition of the fetch, about which we talked so much while approaching the house, interests me beyond expression. Let me hear more exactly the popular account you have received of it."

"Thus, Anna. Of some persons appointed to die, a double or counterpart becomes visible, before his or her death, at a time and place where the original could not by possibility appear. Is this your Kilkenny creed?"

"Exactly; with the addition that the fetch or double must—to insure the death of the reality—be seen in the night or evening."

"And now I remember that, also;" Tresham paused a moment, then with a deep sigh, added—

"I have some melancholy authority for the truth of fetches."

"You alarm me, Harry; let me hear what you mean; but see—your servant."

They had gained, purposing to walk in the garden till dinner, the bottom of the staircase; and, in the corner of the hall, now saw a low round lump of a man, who with hat in hand, and his large heavy eyes bent on the ground, stood motionless, silent, and inexplicable.

"Well, Larry?" said Tresham to this person.

"Yes, sir," replied the man.

"Yes to what, you goose?"

"We *are* well, thank God an' you, sir."

"Pho, pho—do you seek me?"

"No, then," answered the servant, gravely.

"And what then?" his master asked, impatiently.

"Sure we find you, Masther Harry," was the reply, still

without any appearance of jest, whatever might be the intention.

"And for what purpose do you find me?"

"None in the world, afther all, I'm thinkin'."

"No!" repeated Tresham, smiling, as he recollected his man's unaccountable humour.

"No, in throth; I came here to bid *you* come home to your buke, an' that's to no purpose, God help me that lives to see id; if you did come, you wouldn't read it to any purpose; an' if you did, sure the class-hour is past an' gone, an' so it 'ud be read to no purpose."

"Idiot! did I not charge you, over and over, to warn me of the class-hour?"

"An' sure myself charged *her*, over and over."

"Her! what *is* the cause of your negligence, sirrah?"

"Mrs. Catty, sir."

"I comes an hour ago to Mrs. Catty, in the kitchen, an' Mrs. Catty, my darlin', says myself, warn my masther o' the hour: will you taste a bit o' toasted cheese, Larry? says she; warn him, for the love o' God, says I; a dhrop o' the right kind, says she; warn——"

"Ass!" interrupted Tresham, seriously displeased; then turning to Anna—"My dearest love, we must part, that I may look after this disagreeable blunder; you know him, and what a life I live with him; faithful and attached, indeed, he is, and for that reason, as I believe I before told you, forced on me as my attendant and pest, wherever I go, by the anxious love of my dear mother; but look to him—is he like anything in creation? and then I am quite at a loss how to treat him; sometimes, if not always, he seems to be a hard-grown boy, and if I were sure of this, I could control the fellow; but in my conscience I suspect he is rather an elderly person, old enough to be my father; and under this apprehension one cannot—in fact, I do not know what to do in the matter. But farewell, my dear Anna. You, Larry, follow me to college."

"The evening, Harry; you will certainly keep your evening's appointment?" said Anna.

"True as the dial's hand"—and the lovers parted: Tresham going out at the door, and Anna returning up stairs. But Larry remained stationary, in the darkened corner of the hall, his hat still in his hand, and his eyes rivetted on the floor.

After a considerable pause, he muttered, however, taking up the last word his master had addressed to him, and which, notwithstanding some lapse of time, fretted his ear—

"Ass!—how so then? Because I toasted cheese wid a woman, an' missed the class-hour. Ay: who missed it at the same prasent time? The same that called me ass did; my own masther. Well a-vich: an' how did himself miss it, too? Troth, I could tell him, if he put me to id;" and his hat was now fixed on, and he moved heavily and awkwardly towards the door, when a female voice cautiously pronounced—"Larry! Larry!" and Larry graciously turned with—

"Is id yourself, agin, Mrs. Catty?"

"That's a bitther salutation, only you're a bit too friendly to mane it, Larry," said Mrs. Catty, Kitty, or Catherine, advancing to his side; "Mrs. —— to a Kilkenny lass, isn't the heighth o' good manners, Larry; you had that in Munster."

"Ay, faith, then; an' my first wife along wid it, Catty," he said, in the words of an unmeasured lie, invented at the moment, to serve his crabbed humour.

"Plain Catty is betther, among friends," resumed his companion; "only Kitty, or Kate, or, for the matther o' that, Catherine sounds my name a little genteeler. The poor woman! an' she died?"

"An' I was left a dissolute poor boy," said Larry, recollecting, only to misuse it, one of many words he had endeavoured to imitate during his attendance on his master.

"Och!" Mrs. Catherine exclaimed, putting her cross-barred check apron to her eyes.

"Don't take on, Catty; don't take on; it was a change for the good o' both of us; I'm resigned."

"Och! she was a blest woman wid the likes o' you!" still sobbed Mrs. Catherine.

"An' so I often tould her," said the valet.

"Musha, then, is id the happiest state, entirely, Larry?" altering her voice into a tone of simple interest.

"Why faith, d'ye see me, Catherine, as I often said in regard o' that, a bachelor can only be well enough by himself, while two people may go wrong together."

"Avoch, an' a true sayin'; you'll be lookin' afther your heaven on earth, again, Larry?"

"Just as a wise child afther his cake, Kitty—anywhere bud among the coals," he added, indistinctly.

"You're a vartuous boy, Larry; an' though I say it, a patthern in these uncivil times. But we know you love your masther too well to lave him:" this was half remark, half query.

"D'you hear her, now?" asked Larry of himself; then aloud, "I love my masther, Catty, but, if he doesn't mend, let God help him to another man."

"Lord save us! if I ever thought he was so bad."

"I said nothin' bad about him, Mrs.—— that is Kitty, Miss Catherine I mane; bud his visitors, Catty—look down on us an' keep us! they're too much for the likes o' me; if—orgive us our sins! he isn't one o' them, his own self, Catty, a-roon." During this speech Larry took off his hat and raised his eyes; his face and action expressing, or well affecting, much mysterious trepidation.

"Musha, then, Larry, good boy, don't go frighten us in sich a manner," said Mrs. Catherine, drawing nearer; "what do you mane, at-all-at-all?"

"Why, then, I'll tell you," he resumed, imitating, or sharing the earnestness of his friend: "gettin' wages, as far from me be id to say I do not get, to act the part of a Christhen sarvant-boy, by him, little 'ud myself care, Catty, how many fellow-creatures like me Masther Harry 'ud have about him; bud, d'ye see me, it's another thing, when, afther sendin' me off for the night, he calls down—or up—bad end to me if I knows which——"

"Och! spake out, Larry darlin', spake out! an' look stout like a man, or I'll dhrop stone dead, afore you!" interrupted Mrs. Catherine, pressing still closer, and stretching, perhaps, even her fears too far, as warrant for the familiarity of her manner:—"did ever you lay your eyes on 'em, a-vich?"

"No, Catty; but I hard them; often an' often."

"Who? what?"—and she locked an arm in Larry's.

"Outside iv his dour, I hard him whisperin' wid 'em, an' callin' to 'em, at the dead hour o' the night, Catty; an' sometimes he unlocks it, Catty, an' creeps out to take an airin' wid em, in the lawn; an'——what's that?"

The autumn evening had just begun to set in, and the ever-gloomy old hall in which they stood grew deeper with shadow, while Larry, thus interrupting himself, pointed to its extreme end. Mrs. Catherine screamed with terror, yet under her breath, and in an agony, half feigned, half real,

whispered—"Look yourself, Larry, honey!—look, and tell me if it's there!"

"Not now, I think; that is, I hope, an' pray God," he said, playing with the nervousness which, to say the truth, he had groundlessly excited, purely for the purpose of freeing himself of Mrs. Catherine's close and unwelcome approaches: "bud, as I was fur tellin' you, Catty: there was one night I left him in bed, sick enough to stay there, an' to keep him from roamin' about, an' cullogin' wid 'em, to his no great good, myself just locked his dour, an' put the kay in my pocket: well, a-roon, down I went, by myself, on the road to my own bed; down, down, all the crooked staircases; when, just at the bottom o' the very last flight—the Lord keep us an' save us!—what d'you think I saw standin' afore me?"

"Your masther, Larry!" whispered Mrs. Catherine.

"Or somethin' very like him," answered Larry; "bud see, agin—just turn your head the laste bit round."

"Och! ah! I daarn't!" hiding her head and mob-cap in Larry's bosom.

"Thonom-on-dhoul!—my name isn't Larry, if his own white face—or one that the divil makes as near to it as an egg to an egg—may I die in sin, if I don't see it lookin' at us from behind the ould clock that ticks so dushmal;—I know; I didn't follow him home in time, an' this is his other, cum to send me packin' to himself; och! never you mind if I don't get my fairin' betuxt 'em!"—and Larry at last disengaged himself from Mrs. Catherine's embraces, and broke into the street, while she trundled down stairs to her kitchen.

CHAPTER III.

Immediately after dinner Anna retired, alone, to the drawing-room, and in about half an hour was followed by Maria, who, on entering the apartment, found her deeply engaged in the perusal of a manuscript essay she had got from Tresham, and of the nature of which the elder sister was aware.

Evening brought on its increased shadows, yet, by what light was still afforded, Anna, with some difficulty, continued

to read. Maria proposed to have lights, but her sister rather earnestly objected. "I have much reliance," she said, "on the doctrine of coincidences and sympathies; and in this dim twilight, I can, perhaps, better appreciate the subject of my present study; at least I feel I can." She resumed her reading, and Maria taking up a volume that lay near her, sat down with her young sister in the recess of the old-fashioned window, and for some time also endeavoured to read.

But at last smartly shutting the book, and laying it upon her knee, she protested against any further effort, and again admonished Anna to call for lights, or else prepare for their intended evening walk with Tresham. The other, in rather an impatient tone, replied—

"We need not expect Harry this half hour, sister; and do let me get through this most interesting part without interruption."

"I suppose I must, or should ask your pardon, Anna; but I thought an elder sister might have said so much without being accused of interruption; whether or not I will venture to say more, by expressing my entire dislike of your spending your time over such a subject as that now in your hands."

"Sister!" Anna replied, in a tone of surprise and chagrin—"but I am sure if you thought of what you were then going to say, you would not have said it; this is an essay, Maria, written by Harry Tresham; I shall add nothing else; surely that is enough to show you the severity of your remark, and to warrant me in not quite recollecting it. Pray read your own volume, and, while delighted with its wonderful passages, do not envy me a higher pleasure."

"It is now too late to take advantage of your advice; so I will, instead, try to say a word in answer to your speech. Don't you think it sometimes happens, Anna, that where affection, and talent, and virtue, join to avoid giving pain or doing harm to a beloved object, weakness or infatuation of mind inflict the blow? and let me say that, although Harry Tresham is the very last man I could suspect of intention to lead you astray, I am not so sure of his ability always to turn your young thoughts into a proper path; or if they should wander, to guide them from an improper one—pray, my dear sister, hear me out. I do not wish to hazard a word in defence of the poor volume I took up; it is only a popular

volume, that does not even pretend to help our serious moments, or to form our principles, or wed us to theories; yet, God knows, I had rather have you make such books the only reading of your life, than see you for one hour disturbing your delicate mind with the strange visions contained in that manuscript."

"I will take it for granted, sister, it is not your meaning to be cruel, or—offensive with me——"

"Anna, Anna, you should be sure of that!" interrupted Maria, tears, which her sister did not see, rolling down her cheeks, although her voice was but little affected.

"Well, sister, I am sure; yet, indeed, I must say your words are more—are less kind and good to me than ever they were; you call Harry weak and infatuated—excuse me in turn, for I will go on—but the truth is, Maria, we ever try to bring down in others what we do not understand in them nor possess in ourselves; and therefore, why should I wonder to hear you speak hard of him, or of the studies he recommends to me? As to your own fine book, I say again, you are free to admire it, and as much for the giver's sake too, as you like, if you will only let me read and value this essay for the same reason."

"Mortimer, who at his last parting gave me the poor novel you speak of, is not a school philosopher, Anna; but he is still an educated gentleman, of mature taste and understanding."

"I have made no comparisons—I wish to make none, Maria; and perhaps you ought to be just as indifferent as I am to do so," interrupted Anna, her love, her vanity, and her enthusiasm taking fire at this turn in the conversation.

"Perhaps," Maria rejoined; "but be that as it may, Anna, let me now assist you to put up those braids which the last toss of your head has shaken about you; stoop forward a little, my love; for, after all, our Harry must not find his favourite style of hair neglected; come," and Maria was proceeding in her sisterly task, when Anna, with some ungentle, and indeed, unusual briskness of manner, tossed back her head more violently than ever, and saying, "thank you, thank you very much, sister, but I can use my hands at least," began to twist and re-twist, and pile up her fine hair with great rapidity, and into most uncouth forms and coilings,

continuing, after a moment's pause, to speak in a sharp and quick voice——

"But, Maria, since we have chanced on Captain Mortimer's name, may I inquire if, before he left the house to-day, he thought proper to explain to *you* his strange manner when he was presented to Harry Tresham?"

"We have never since spoken on the trifling matter," Maria replied, still calmly; "nor do I care to trouble him farther about it;" this last assertion was, however, a little overstrained, as Maria really purposed to interrogate her lover on the subject.

"You might ask the gentleman to oblige *me*, I think," said Anna, in increasing coldness.

"To oblige my sister in her slightest wish, I would anxiously do anything," resumed Maria; "but one word, dear Anna, on a charge you have just made. You say I am ignorant of the matter you hold in your hands, if not incapable of understanding it. Let me inform you that since you got the manuscript from Harry, and while it lay on the table in this drawing-room, I have attentively read it; and not unwarrantably either, though you look at me so, for you may recollect you said as much as that I might take that freedom. I read it, Anna, and perhaps understood it too; and it is from this knowledge of its nature and tendency I now speak."

"In the first place, then," rejoined Anna, with vehemence, "you think me the child that must not be allowed to share the strong food that is harmless to a more womanly appetite; else why forbid me the consideration of this very essay you have yourself perused? and next, let me ask you, sister, from what particular passage you judge the manuscript to be improper or dangerous?"

"Taking up your last word, in preference, I do not hesitate to say that the whole is dangerous."

"General assertions prove nothing, sister; you ought to be aware of that," said the young logician, playing off some airs of superiority; "and since you have so attentively gone through the whole, you can surely afford to be more particular."

"I admit I am no casuist, Anna, and you will not, therefore, expect from me a very correct method; nor, indeed, the good words you use with such ease to yourself; yet I can point out a particular passage. The object of the entire paper

is to prove the re-appearance on earth of the dead ; and history, biography, and anecdote—nay, Scripture itself—are all quoted to support the now childish belief. But the essayist, having to get over one plausible commonplace—namely, the rare occurrence, at present, of his supernatural visitations, has recourse to a theory of his own ; he supposes——"

"That the visitation does not cease, although we are blind to it !" interrupted Anna, in a deep whisper, suddenly bending forward and catching her sister's arm—"that they come and go, over and around us, and are with us and present to us in our blindness !—that the air, and the shadows of the air, and the recesses, and the depths of space, teem with the busy and mysterious denizens of another world !—while to the eyes, made dim by the gross mind of our latter days, there has ceased to be given the seeing power of the days that are gone ; though, if the primitive spirit could be reinstated within—and there is a way, sister, to bring that to pass—it would see, and hear, and understand, in a total freedom from vulgar fear, and in the wonder of knowledge, only, such signs and whispers of the to come, as must redeem us out of the bondage of mere human speculation, and elevate man's soul, even while pent up in man's body, to an approach towards the intelligence of angels !"

Anna's enthusiasm had fully escaped during this piece of oratory, which, delivered as it was in a voice and manner of the strangest energy, while her jetty eyes flashed through the twilight, so much affected the rational calmness of the hearer, as, for a moment, to surprise and make her silent and in the pause, Anna triumphantly resumed, by asking—"And now, sister, show me the danger of this !"

"It is easily done," answered Maria, successfully rallying her spirits ; and she was about to continue, when their younger sister, Bessy, accompanied by three of her playmates and cousins, entered the apartment, all inquiring why Tresham was so long absent ; for he had made himself a great favourite with the juniors of the family, by his gentleness of manners and the wondrous anecdotes he readily told for their amusement.

This interruption reminded Anna of the lateness of the hour ; and, sending the children for their walking attire, the sisters agreed to suspend, till another opportunity, their unfinished argument ; for they made no question but Tresham

would be with them in a moment; and their difference of opinion, and any little bitterness it might have drawn forth, were now more than forgotten in the sweet kiss, and the sweeter tears, interchanged between them; Anna, after a moment's reflection, becoming the first to negotiate a penitent, loving, and unqualified peace. Of the immediate point at issue, indeed, nothing was said; but it was acceded by the one that Harry Tresham was an amiable young person, of uncommon genius; and, by the other, that Mortimer was a finished gentleman, a worthy soul, and a gallant captain.

The children returned with hats, scarfs, and shawls, and the sisters assisted each other, in the scanty light, to adjust their habiliments. Then all sat down, anxiously expecting to hear, at every moment, Tresham's knock below.

But some time escaped without his appearance; and, at first, Anna was surprised, and very much surprised; then she thought it unkind of Tresham, and very unkind; and, at last, and when nearly an hour had elapsed, she grew angry and fidgetty.

"It is now so much past the time, that I am sure he will not come," she said, turning to Maria.

"He appointed to come?" asked her sister.

"It was his own particular appointment; and yet to leave me waiting for him, without a line, a word of apology, when he knows I wait for him, and expect our evening walk—he never did so before—and is it kindly done, now, sister?"

"It is not well, indeed, if he cannot well explain it."

"Oh, Harry Tresham has got another lady to love, that's the whole of it," said Bessy.

"Fie, Bessy, my love," said Maria; "you should not let your good spirits teach you to say such strange things."

"But I'm sure of it," re-urged Bessy—"because sister Anna, herself, told me, that gentlemen never stay away from the lady they love first, until they begin to love another better; and, besides, I heard you say to her, when Harry first came to the house, that you feared he was too young and romancing to love long and in earnest. But I'll blab no more about it, if Anna finishes for me, and Mary, and Patty, and little Kate, here, the terrible story she began for us last night."

"Where did I stop, Bessy?" asked Anna, willing to forget her disappointment in a theme always fascinating to her.

"Just where the spirit of the woman's husband appeared to her, twenty years after he was murdered, and in the very bed-room, a hundred miles from their own home," answered Bessy, under her breath, and moving, with her young companions, nearer to the elder sisters.

"Well," Anna resumed; "the shade told her to have a certain part in the inn-yard dug up, and there she should find the skull, with the hole in the right temple, made by the hand that killed him; and to get a certain chest broken open in the very house where she then slept, and there she should find the purse she had herself given him on the unhappy morning of his departure."

"Oh, 'tis frightful!" whispered the child, whose merry laugh was now silenced, as, with her playmates, she cringed closer to the speaker. The room they sat in was unusually spacious, and unusually gloomy, too, as from the whim or bad taste of its original proprietor, the walls were divided into oblongs, covered with the raven black marble for which the quarries adjacent to Kilkenny are celebrated. In the middle of the wall, at the remote end, a door led into an inner apartment; and this was now open, giving an uncomfortable feeling of desolate space, and admitting, through a window at the back of the house, the pale and visionary rays of the rising moon, which, intercepted and disturbed by the fluttering tops of trees that shot up to a level with the window, crept over the floor within, in a kind of self-animated motion. After the child's last words, a general pause ensued; and, in a hush like death, all seemed to hearken to the conclusion of the tale: the sharp tick of the old clock on the landing-place, and the asthmatic breathings of a dog, who slumbered on a mat at the near door, becoming, in the silence, painfully distinct; while, by pressures of hand and foot, the terrified children directed each other's attention to remote parts of the room, where fancy had pictured some hideous chimera.

"Did she obey him, Anna?"—at last resumed Bessy, in a voice that would have been inaudible but for the intense silence.

"She did, and the skull and purse were found," answered Anna, now not able to exert her own voice beyond a murmur, "and the next night, as she sat alone and expecting him in her chamber—that very same chamber—and by the beams of a late moon, the woman thought she saw——"

"Oh, stop, sister, stop, or come out of this large place," interrupted Bessy.

"Do, Anna, forbear, and let us go down to the parlour—or I shall go for lights"—said Maria, who, in spite of herself, began to feel nervous, and was anxious to break the gathering illusion.

"No, Maria, let us be as we are," rejoined Anna, and then continued, not observing that Maria had gone out through the near door—"I love this creeping gloom, though it chills me. The moon rises abroad in mist;—and see! almost the very effect I was describing:—look through that door into the other apartment;—accidental folds of drapery, and other common forms, seem to get horrid motion—cloudy masses curl through the corners—the darkness itself becomes instinct with life, as if the awful dead were there, listening, in gratified silence, to the tales of their own wondrous agency!—as if one of them was this moment moving towards us!"

Anna's voice sank to a solemn murmur, then to a whisper, then she was abruptly silent. A lengthened pause of positive terror came over the children, while their eyes endeavoured to pierce the indistinct space towards which the young visionary pointed; then their heads bent towards each other, and they inquired closely, although in silence, of each other's faces.

"Oh Lord, why don't you speak, Anna?" Bessy at length asked.

"Hush, hush!" was Anna's reply, and she held up her hand, waving it twice with a warning gesture.

Another pause followed; the children cringed close together, and they clung to each other, and when the silence and the gloom had wrought on them to excess, although no words preceded the movement, they slid stealthily from their chairs, they crept along noiselessly until they gained the door, and then rushed wildly through it.

The door through which Maria had passed from the room had remained open:—at the moment Anna had raised her admonishing hand to the children, and had uttered her whispered "hush, hush!" she saw Tresham quietly enter. Anna did not rise to bid him welcome, she was pettish at his breach of appointment, and her pride expected an apology before it would allow her affection to speak out. Her lover walked slowly towards her; he sat down on a seat near her, and she waited, with flurried expectancy, for his explanation. None

was offered ; not a word was spoken ; the offended girl was doubly hurt, she turned her head away and looked through the window. Still Tresham spoke not. Nay, moved not, but there sat, wordless and motionless, like a stony image of himself.

After the escape of the children Anna was left alone with her unaccountable lover : and still she would not speak ; though something more than offended pride now kept her silent. A shocking fancy had seized her—she feared it was not her lover who sat close to her. All their former discourses—all her cherished legends—the hour—the darkness—the predisposition of her mind—the tomb-like silence, only alive with the echoed pulsation of her own heart, everything added to the horrible conviction.

She controlled her own respiration ; she stretched the very nerves of her ears to hear him breathe—but she could not detect even that faint indication of humanity ; one flutter—one catch of his breath would have been rapture—would have flung her into his arms—but it came not !

Amid all the whirl of her feelings Anna was, however, able to ask herself if it could be a trick that Tresham was practising upon her. She recollected their conversation of the day, and for an instant thought it probable ; and a recurrence, in the same breath, to her first cause of quarrel with her inattentive lover, came with still more effect to Anna's relief, who was yet sufficiently the woman to master even her consternation by her vanity : or, perhaps, she wished to assume an unconsciousness of real emotion, as the best means to escape the influence of the being who caused it.

"So, Mr. Tresham !" at last she cried out—"so, sir—you come here after your breach of appointment with me—to frighten the children of the family—and myself among the number !" she paused for an answer : none came ! and, slowly rising, she continued—"making me ridiculous to them—and ungraciously withholding the explanation you know to be due to my love and confidence !"

Again she stopped, and only heard the repetition of her own words, by the echoes around her. She dared not advance a step—but she had to pass him : and her voice at least must bear her company—"Then, sir, if such silly and insulting silence is your humour—excuse me if—if I leave you to—— enjoy it !"

During the pause we have indicated in the latter part of the sentence, Anna swept by him, like a breeze, towards the remote door; as she approached it, he moved! and this, although a moment before it had been the assurance she gasped for, now made her delirious with terror; she plunged into the inner room—looked behind her—he was at her back! The door closed on them; and, in the outward apartment they had left, Maria, who had just then returned with a servant bearing lights, heard a heavy fall and a scream; and then all was silent.

CHAPTER IV.

THE same night, Tresham's servant, Larry, was aroused, by a great knocking, from a deep sleep into which he had fallen on a sofa in his master's chamber. Upon the first appearance of this person, we could not say of him as much as he deserves; but while now asleep, and before the knocking has called him into active re-existence, we shall make him and the reader better acquainted.

It would wrong many species of what are called the lower animals of the earth, to give Larry, equally with them, the instinctive cunning by which alone he walked his path of life; yet, if nature had not allowed him enough of this attribute to make him a rogue at once, she certainly had allowed him enough to make himself one at his leisure; and, perhaps, with the exception of pocket-picking and petty larceny, he was not the lazy steward to hide his talent under ground. Even our exception may be disputed on the faith of certain anecdotes of Larry's conduct abroad, of which his master made no secret. Now and then, while sojourning in France and Italy, Tresham had given entertainments to some polite friends, and it was Larry's business, as well as his pride and glory, to see the table "furnished forth," for the honour of "ould Ireland and the young masther," as gaily as the tables of those at which they had been guests. Tresham's travelling plate chest was not, however, equal to Larry's ambition; that is, so far as he allowed himself to

canvass the matter. Tresham was of the same opinion ; and some surprise therefore crossed his mind to see, on banqueting occasions in his lodgings, and just when his friends were about to sit down, various fine pieces of table equipage, of which he could not recollect he had before been master. On the first or second occasion of his surprise, Tresham, supposing he must have miscalculated the extent of his own riches, said nothing ; when new provocations to wonder appeared, however, he ventured some inquiries that were only carelessly answered ; till, at last, startled by the appearance of a still new and massive piece of plate, in which part of the desert was served up, and which he was quite sure did not belong to him, he turned to Larry, who stood at one side, rubbing his hands and gravely eyeing his master, and asked, "Where did you get this, Larry ?" but the sole reply was, while the man gave a kind of soldier's salute, by turning out the palm of his hand over his forehead—"Up the counthry, your honour."

If any doubt existed, notwithstanding, of Larry's honesty, none could exist that he possessed, to a pitch of excellence, the inventive talent. Others might boast of having never told a lie ; it was his peculiarity that, to the best of his knowledge, he had never told truth ; certainly he had never yet told the whole truth ; and from consistent use, since his infancy, of this wariness of disposition, it now arrived that, even if he had wished, he could not tell it. Cunning, and a liar, and perhaps a thief, it might seem to follow that he was an immoral character ; but this would rather be an uncharitable deduction ; Larry told lies, not from a vicious love of falsehood, but from the pleasure it gave, or the advantages he thought it might yield ; he was cunning, because he had no other mental faculty to exercise ; because of reason, in the true meaning of the word, he had not a jot : so that, when he was not cunning, he was nothing beyond a misshaped mass of inert clay : and when he filched, it was only as the fox throws a goose over his back, without ever breaking the commandments.

Some, indeed, conceived that he was an accountable agent, inasmuch as he possessed, above the regular quadruped, glimmering notions of another world ; but these notions existed in one shape only in Larry's mind—namely, a jealousy and fear of that world's undue interference in the concerns

of this; and here was the puzzle of his character; how he could be very cunning and very credulous, appearing, at first sight, anomalous. To those who knew the history of his early life, and who had any experience of the inveteracy of early impressions, this seeming contradiction, however, soon vanished. Under the immediate tutelage of his mother, in whose cabin Tresham, when a sickly child, had also received the elements of his present absurdity, Larry, from his cradle, was a firm believer in supernatural agency; nor could the maturity of his natural talent, nor yet his knowledge of the world, remove prejudices thus unconsciously formed and deeply stamped. The only way in which his cunning operated, in this case, was to enable him occasionally to assume an apparent indifference of the terrors that ruled him; or to enjoy the terrors of others, or even to increase them, by exaggerating his own, some proof of which we have already seen in his conversation with Mrs. Catherine. But for this he suffered well when he was alone. Like philosopers who sneer at misfortune in books, but who almost invariably cringe to it in their parlours or garrets, Larry, before others, strove to banter with his tyrants, but, to himself and to his pillow, admitted, in utter fear and trembling, the very great chance of a visitation.

Such finesse was partly the result of his travels, that in other respects scarcely improved him. Laughed at for his folly, wherever he went, he had fortified himself against unnecessary humiliation; and the world thus taught him to trifle with his mortal fears, in the same way that it teaches other ingenious young persons to trifle with the good principles they sometimes bring into it. And here we should mention lesser points of character that the wholesome ridicule of his fellows, particularly during his residence in England, had fixed in him. Larry began his travels the most broad-spoken and long-winded of Irishmen; but, shouted at for his brogue and idiom, even more unmercifully than for his superstition, he admitted—from the shyness of anything national that invariably attaches to the vulgar of his country—the justice of the rebuke, and did all in his power to benefit by it; assisted by his cunning, and his watchfulness of himself and others, he spoke less and listened more; retrenched his rich expressions and roundabout; aped the words of his betters; tried pithiness and briskness, now and then; and, grafting every-

thing on his still predominant brogue, at last partially succeeded in proving to the world that there moves not on its surface so ridiculous a creature, when not of the first class, as a travelled and improved Irishman.

Strange, after all this, that he had a strong liking for his master; he would himself call it "a hankering regard;" but he had. It did not, indeed, resemble the love that any other creature bore Tresham, or could bear him; it was uneven, capricious, arbitrary, and, in right of the patronage of the student's mother, bordering on the tyrannical. Perhaps their continued sympathy in the nonsense with which their brains (if one of them was blessed with any) had been stuffed, might have helped to strengthen the bond between master and servant. Tresham, although his supernaturals were now systematized so as to suit his intellect and education, while Larry's still lay huddled together in the primitiveness of raw material—liked to have some one to listen to his rhapsodies, and Larry, generally speaking, liked to listen, and felt, perhaps, a little vain, if not grateful, at being called to the office of listener; yet, even this is uncertain, inasmuch as out of Tresham's new notions on such subjects, or his presenting an old notion in a new shape, which was all the same to the hearer, Larry drew cause for serious remonstrance and misgiving. He did not admire Tresham's venturing alone into dangerous ground, whither, as may be inferred, he was unable to follow him; he did not admire the student's muttered soliloquies and aspirations, and his lonesome walks in the park, which now became frequent; in fact, he had a bad opinion of his master's ways altogether, and began to imbibe an undefined awe of his secret practices, with vain bodings of indifferent results. Very lately, they had spoken a great deal of the supposed power of the Evil One to confer superior knowledge and riches, on certain terms; and, to Larry's view, Tresham pressed the subject too far, and persevered too long and too earnestly in getting an account of all he knew of the advantages derivable in such a case; he had even proposed to his servant such startling questions, as, "Did he think the individual had ever really appeared at the summons? was it easy to obtain an interview with him? might he be depended on, in a fair bargain? and was it possible to overreach or outwit him?" Larry tried in vain to shift the subject when it came to this; gave evasive and temporising answers; drew a holy

sign with his thumb on his forehead, and prayed aloud that his master and himself might be kept out of temptation and danger; and, when it was his duty to leave Tresham for the night, withdrew in no very assured state of mind; he would say nothing; little said was soonest mended; but might he never see glory if himself liked to think about it.

On the evening of the adventure at Mr. Ruth's house, while ostensibly awaiting his master's hour for retiring to bed, Larry locked himself in, a prey to bodings of unusual force, and, out of a certain pocket extracting a certain flask, called on it to dispel the terrors of his solitude, and, as we have seen, afterwards fell asleep. The furious knocking before mentioned caused him to jump up quickly, out of a slumber of he knew not how long; and then, after some staggering and scrambling, he shambled to the door, and, expecting to admit his young master, opened it—but drew back on the moment; for there, instead of the person his half-closed eyes anticipated, Larry beheld, in the depths of the twilight, a tall, black figure, topped by a fiery-red face of severe and peculiar expression, with eyes that flashed, and a mouth that leered, he thought, maliciously at him. This personage also wore—a queu, the simple-witted had called it; but, notwithstanding its point of origin, Larry, to his grief and horror, thought it might pass well enough for a tail; and in his hand, as he slowly paced after the servant into the middle of the room, he carried a shining black wand.

"I don't like him at all," muttered Larry, as he heard, unanswered, some questions concerning his master put to him in a hard tone by the stranger.

"Mr. Tresham not here, then?" repeated the visitor.

"What hour o' the blessed night is id for the likes of him to walk in among us?" continued Larry, still in an under-tone discourse with himself.

"Tell me plainly, is he here, fellow?" resumed the object of his suspicions, in a high passion.

"Not in this room, as you persave, sir," at last answered Larry; then aside—"musha, he's as black as——"

"Do you know me?" suddenly asked the stranger.

"Why, then, not over-an'-above well," still edging off, and venturing a sly look at the visitor's lower extremities. The other caught his glance; and then, after a moment's pause, burst into a harsh and loud laugh, that, to Larry's increased

consternation, lasted some time, gradually gaining a horrid climax, as the provocative, whatever it was, became keener, until at length it reached an explosion of shouts that rang through the old building.

"Turn away your head, a moment," resumed the visitor, in his own time; Larry complied, and this individual walked, with stamping feet, on the boards, behind an old leather-backed chair, that completely hid the lower half of his figure, and, resting his hands on it, continued :—

"Can you even throw a guess at me?"

"I was a bad hand at a guess from a child up; but myself thinks your honour looks like a civil gentleman."

"Do you believe that in your soul? asked the stranger, eagerly; answer me truly."

"I wouldn't like to cross your honour in anything, or to say anything wrong before man or my Maker; but sure it can be no harm for the likes of a poor boy like me to keep a civil word for his betthers."

"Am *I* your better?" still questioned the visitor, in a slow emphatic tone; "tell truth, I warn you again; but that's no matter; I can easily know whether you do or not."

Under these circumstances Larry was silent. The question was repeated, and, before it had been fully pronounced, he clapped his hands in the most natural way, looking out at the window, and said,—"Oh, the poor young masther! its rainin' on him! an' sure enough I hard himsef say this very mornin' we were to have a gineral cessation of wet weather; does your honour think so? the Frenchmen are great judges o' the weather; they say it *plews*, when we say it's rainin'; an' it *fais* glass, that is, it makes the frost, when we say it's only freezin'; musha, I always thought that very droll: was your honour ever among the parley-wows? they're a quare set o' sprissauns, every way: but where's the masther, is what I wondher."

"Ay, where is he? not keep his appointment with me! and after calling on me so often! has he left the college, man?"

"Myself doesn't know to a sartainty; but I'm thinkin' your reverence 'ud maybe cum across him in the park, out there."

"*My* reverence! what name is that you give me?" said the stranger, very angrily, and his eyes looking dangerous; "tell

me, fellow, what is your private opinion of—the old gentleman himself?"

"Oh! ah!" roared Larry, suddenly thrown off his guard; but, reigning himself in, he continued—"we ax your honour's ten thousand pardons—it was a cramp, or a thing o' the kind, that I got abroad wid the masther, an' it ketches a hould iv me, bad manners to id, an odd time, in the calf o' the leg, here;" and, to keep up *vraisemblance*, Larry stroked the part with his hand.

"Does it? suppose you were ketched, as you call it, by both legs together?"

"The Lord save me an' keep me! long threatenin' cums at last—I'm done for," shaking and chattering, and wringing his hands.

"Have a care what you mutter there," continued his tormentor—"do you smell anything?"

"The nose o' me is no great things, plaise your honour; bud, if I war to say it, myself thinks there's as nice a scent as ever I got in my born days," answered Larry, in a real effort to cheat the devil in the dark, for, from his fright and fancy, it seemed to his nostrils as if the room had an abominable stench of sulphur.

"Well for you you think so; it saves you some time in altering your likings; but answer my question, plainly: do you hate and defy the individual I spoke of, or what? out with it."

"Plaise your honour, we're tould not to judge on no account, for fear of being judged in our turns; an' hard words, upon people we know nothing of, isn't a Christian turn, the world over."

"Christian!"

"Yes, sir—or a thing that-a-way: a good turn, or a kind turn, or whatever plaises your honour best; an' sure, myself knows little o' the good gintle—the gintleman, I mane, in regard I never laid my two eyes on him."

"Look up!—are you sure of what you say?"

"Oh, my leg, my leg!" stooping down, and rubbing hard with both hands—"oh, the divil, sich a cramp—the Lord forgive us! an' no offence to any one—bud the likes o' this cramp never ailed a born creature besides myself."

"You have twice heard my question without answering,

and silence gives consent : that will do : say your pater noster backwards."

"That's more nor I could do if ever so willin', in regard I never larnt it forwards, your honour; they had trouble enough wid me at home about id, but sorrow a farther nor 'daily-bread' myself was able to get, from that day to this."

"All the better. Give me your hand."

"Bad end to me if I do then!" muttered Larry, after another roar, and a plunge towards the wall, for to the door he could not get, as his visitor stood between him and it; then in a tone of simple humility, exquisitely feigned, he continued aloud—"*Me* give a hand to your honour? *Me* put my poor crooks under a gintleman's five fingers! avoch, we thank you kindly, sir, for the honour an' glory you mane us, bud we havn't forgot our manners so much as that, anyhow; we didn't go among the Frinch for nothin'."

"Did you ever hear from the person we talk about?"

"Musha, never, never; an' I call God to witness, this blessed an' holy night."

"Are you so sure of that, either?" continued his catechist in a thundering voice. "Who bid you steal the silver cup at Venice?"

"Ja—s presarve us! it's all over wid me!" cried the discomfited man-servant; then, turning round—"Stale, your honour!—stale a cup!—musha, then, what cup? or what 'ud your honour mane at all?"

"Or the candlestick you slid into your pocket at the saint's shrine in Paris—who whispered into your ear to do that?—or the large salver you buttoned into the breast of your coat off the cardinal's sideboard at Rome—who helped you then? Ungrateful scoundrel! Is this the way you remember an old friend? You! a fellow, that, if the angel Gabriel came down, would have a grab at his silver trumpet!"

"Savin' your honour's favour," cried Larry, a little relieved that, after all, his companion did not know the true facts of the case, "an', under your honour's tinder mercy, I'll tell you the rights of all that in a minute, an' as thrue as if it war my dyin' day; the little matther of a cup was bought out of my own lawful money, saved out of my lawful wages; an' it's now, I remember, that a little bare-legged gorçoon—garçon they say among the parle-wows, an it's very like the Irish, isn't id, your honour?—he cum up to myself in the

broad noonday, an' in the open streets, offerin' to sell id for a song; sure the silversmith an' himself are alive an' to the fore this very day; an', as for that big ould silver dish——"

"Silence, man! I know you, and you know me; so enough for the present; what is your master doing in the park yonder?—ghost-hunting?"

"Under favor to them, sir, myself has a kind of a notion that they're kind to him."

"I long suspected it; and even now, I suppose, he invokes them under the moon in some of the shrubberies?"

"Many's the word is thrue in guess, sir."

"Silly man, listen to me;" the stranger advanced.

"Anything in raison, sir;" and Larry drew back.

"Stand where you are, and listen to me. Your master and you shall give up all this ghost business, and attend to something better that I can teach you both; and if I detect you humouring him in such nonsense—nay, if you do not this instant renounce and laugh at them, and if——"

"I was hired for a steady man, your honour, by his own mother, God help me," demurred Larry.

"You shall laugh with your whole heart and soul, I say."

"I can't, your honour, myself doesn't know how."

"Or feel what I hold in my hand—come!—laugh out at all the ghosts in the world, or that ever visited it!"

"I can't, sir;—musha, I never could! 'twas a want wid me, from my cradle!"

"Then am I to work a miracle—laugh!" and he gently belaboured him.

"An' wid my mother, sir—an' her mother afore her—it ran in the family!"—as in odd capers he expressed his dislike of the test.

"Did it? did it?"—resumed the stranger, increasing his assault.

"Hi, hi, ho!"

"Louder—a hearty laugh!—a laugh in earnest!"

"Ho, ho—oh!"—and here he dropped on his knees.

"What do you kneel for, now, you precious fellow? But no matter; kneel still and listen to me further. Tell your master I am much displeased he should have left his chamber, to-night, after my express commands to the contrary. You mark me?"

"I do—sir; we're afther markin' aich other."

"Say, too, I now go to seek him; and, that if we should not meet, I will certainly come back to-morrow early. Did he bleed at the mouth since morning?"

"Only a little, your honour."

"How long have you waited on him?"

"Och, musha, sense we war weenuchs o' that hoighth, together," answered Larry, extending his hand, to illustrate his words, about five or six inches over the floor, for he was still in a kneeling position; "it was the will o' God that we war born for aich other; an' a bitther bargain he is to me from that day to this; for, betuxt himself an' his friends, myself hasn't the life of a Christhen dog."

"Was he ever ill in this matter until to-day?"

"Once, sir, afore we went among the parley-wows: an' once over agin, afore we came to this place."

"Well; deliver my words carefully; and, ha, ha!"—he continued, raising his black wand to the door as he went out.

"Hi, hi," responded Larry, and his visitor retired.

"What's the use o' my sayin' the divil go wid him, sense every mother's son goes away along wid his own self?" he soliloquized, still on his knees. Then Larry brought to mind, with remorse and apprehension, the words he had been compelled to use, the hour of the night, and the place; for he recollected that, only a few steps from where he knelt, there was a villanous black closet, where Tresham kept unholy piles of skulls and loose bones, which the student consulted in his leisure hours of anatomical study; and, overcome with this knowledge, he asked pardon, in a mental aspiration, for his late transgressions, and was so zealously engaged, that he did not perceive the entrance of his master, until, close at his back, he heard him say—

"What, at your devotions, Larry? This is right; but I did not think you so godly."

Taken by surprise, and under the influence of brandy half slept away, Larry asked—"*Are* you the masther?"

"Why, you and I say so, Larry; what's the matter?"

"Master Harry, honey, is id yourself!"

"Fool, you rave out of your sleep, or have been tippling: get away to bed; or no, stay a moment."

Larry, convinced, arose, and said, "I had one along wid me, sense, masther Harry."

"Indeed, Larry! may I believe you?"

The servant bared his arm, adding, "I can show you the naked thruth, sir."

"What! an evil spirit?"

"The old father o' them all; an' more betoken, he left a message wid me for you; bud am I to keep promise wid the likes of him?"

"How did your visitant look? what kind of person?" Larry minutely described the face, figure, and dress of the individual, and Tresham turned away with a "pshaw!" disappointed and somewhat humiliated, that in the faithful portrait he could not avoid recognising his medical attendant and old friend, Doctor Butler. This discovery produced another train of thought. "The good doctor thinks too much of only slight symptoms, and would inconvenience me with his rules; yet I feel feverish and exhausted;" and the student flung himself on the sofa.

The moon, fully risen, streamed through a Gothic casement at his back, and flickered on the opposite wall. Tresham looked long at it with half-closed eyes; and he thought—fancy and fanaticism as usual on the wing—that spectral light most fit to afford a doubtful illumination to the troops of spirits he believed to be busy in its beam. Wishing to enjoy it unmixed with the struggling rays of a lamp his servant had just lighted, he desired Larry to remove the lamp into the closet. The valet did not answer nor stir; and, when the command was repeated, asked—"Which closet, masther Harry?"

"Which, fool? there is but one; quick, remove it."

Larry at last took the lamp, with little energy of action, and, scarcely opening the closet door, thrust it in at arm's length; then hastily shuffled back to stand behind the sofa on which his master reclined.

"How intensely the hour and the situation affect me!" resumed Tresham; then in a low and enthusiastic tone he continued—"Oh, if the shade of my dear departed brother could now unveil itself to us!"

"A merciful God forbid, sir," said Larry.

"Appear, oh, appear, if you can; and if in zeal, and belief, and simplicity of heart, I am yet unworthy, appear, beloved Michael, and fill and enlarge my soul with the eternal secret!"

Something agitated the darkness near the door, and, in a second after, a faint form shot close by the wall, intercepting and catching for itself the weak moonlight. A dim face turned towards him, and a clouded eye rested on his—it was Anna's !—changed in character and expression, as if countless time, and unimaginable events and existences, had come between him and her since their last unhappy meeting ; still it was Anna's !

Tresham started up, and at first free from supernatural fears, approached the figure, as for a moment it rested in the moonshine ; and—" Good God, Anna !" he cried, " can it be you ? how generous to a poor invalid—I——" but he was here interrupted by the resumed motion of the figure, which, before he had advanced two steps, faded back into the mass of shade, that, like a funeral drapery, surrounded the door ; and then it was seen no more in the apartment.

Larry, at the first words addressed by Tresham to the apparition, groaned, and sitting down, concealed himself behind the sofa, and now as Tresham hastened to follow, Larry cried out from his hiding place—" Her fetch ! her fetch ! don't dare to cross it, masther Harry ! don't stir a foot !"

" Fetch ! Fetch !" echoed Tresham, the dreadful idea now, for the first time, seizing his mind. " Her fetch ! you have not seen the figure—you could not ! It was not like her—or if it was—she has heard I am ill, and, though the hour is late, comes to visit me. It is so !—but let us be sure—follow me !" and he rushed through the door.

" Never an inch if I could help it, an' if it was good to stay here alone," said Larry, standing up and looking round him. His first instinct was to arm himself with a light, and, forgetting, in the superior agony of the moment, his terrors of the closet, and only calling to mind that there was the help he wanted, he ran to the door and pushed it open. The violent shock disturbed the peaceful fragments of mortality that lay on the shelves around, and some of them rolled down while all moved ; the lamp which burned in the middle of the small nook, glaring upon, and bringing out their ghostly whiteness. Utterly confounded, Larry emitted a cry, and snatched at the lamp ; but in the unusual effort, stumbled over a skull that was still rolling on the floor, and not being able to recover or balance his ill-contrived figure, fell flat ; this brought a horrid clatter on his head ; he scrambled

about, grasping something cold and loathsome at every turn; finally, he kicked down, broke, and extinguished the lamp, and soon after gaining his legs, ran, yelling after his master.

Tresham, returning from a vain pursuit, met him outside the door, when Larry flung himself at his knees, and clung round them. The student, excited and overwrought by other feelings, had no sympathy for his servant, but, hastily disengaging himself, passed him, and re-entered the chamber, and was in the act of shutting the door, when Larry, with continued cries, cast himself against it, pleading and straining hard for re-admission. Tresham resisted him, and it became a trial of strength between master and man.

"Let me in, for the love o' the mother o' saints? let me in, an' may you have a long life, a good death, an' a favourable judgment! Murther-anowns, Masther Harry, let me in!" he reiterated, growing furious, and redoubling his efforts—"Would you shuv me out along wid her? what is to become o' me, or where am I to go?"

"To bed—or to the devil!" answered his master, at last successful in slapping the door in his face; and he instantly locked it, and flung himself once more on the sofa.

"You'll suffer for this!" exclaimed Larry, outside, and now boisterous in despair—"You'll suffer for it, if there's one in heaven, or your own mother on earth, to judge betuxt us!—I renounce you for a brute-baste of a masther! I'll quit you and your ways, to-morrow mornin' early, an' tell, up to your mother's face, how you're goin' on an' how you trated me! let me in, I advise you!"

"Begone!" cried Tresham, "or I'll shoot you as dead as Julius Cæsar!" and he rose, as if to prepare for executing his threat. The desired effect was soon produced; Larry, suddenly decamping, but not until he had growled, in much bitterness, and from a safe position at the side of the door—"Och! never fear you! it's in you to do it! what's bred in the bone 'ill break out in the flesh! God forgive you! an' the Redeemer look down on me this night!" The last words were uttered as he descended the stairs, and Tresham, at length, had quiet and opportunity to think.

The damp overspread his forehead, the breath was pent up in his heart, his very life was chilled; yet Tresham felt more anguish than fear. Had he seen an unreal semblance of his mistress? This question, built upon his superstitious prejudices,

was agony; he could not follow it. Was it herself, her real self, as he had supposed? the probability was slight, yet he clung to it; affection and anxiety might have prompted her visit, and feminine delicacy might have caused her to shorten it, and act the silent and strange part she had acted. Then came another fancy. Although he had been at first convinced that the appearance bore a likeness to Anna, still he argued to assure himself that he might have been mistaken; and he strove to forget its relation to her, by investing it with the character of the apparition of a beloved sister, who, some years older than Tresham, had died long before his visit to the continent. There was no time, he recollected, to form correct observations, nor ought he to pretend, in the imperfect light that the hasty moment had afforded, to have come to any different conclusion. He invoked the spirit of a brother, and the spirit of a sister attended him; the substitution, in Tresham's conceit, was plausible; as he dwelt upon it, the idea fully occupied his mind, and his bosom thrilled with a peculiar interest.

He had seen a supernatural being! and now first experienced the truth of a long-cherished theory. Tresham was brave; and, even if he had not been an enthusiast, the recollection must not have unmanned him; but none save an enthusiast can tell with what ease, with what devotion, enthusiasm "commends the ingredients of her poisoned chalice to her own lips." Tresham had not power to admit the sentiment of fear while his soul revelled in the consciousness of direct communication with a spiritual essence.

In such a heated state of mind he thought it was impossible he could sleep, and therefore declined any preparation for bed; but he slept, notwithstanding; even where he was, out of place on the sofa. He slept, yet had no rest nor refreshment. The toiling spirit still sweated within, and Tresham was not sufficiently aware that physical disease lent to mental anguish its treacherous aid to shake and convulse him. Nightmare, in hideous variety, and accompanied by the sense of real occurrence that so terribly heightens the visitation, came upon him. He had not distinguished his lapse into slumber, and, through the seemingly continued action, there was none of that rapid and mysterious self-relief that—by an agony of mind or soul too subtle and complex for waking recollection—gives, in the thick horrors of some hellish dream, the

blessed assurance of our being only fettered in the "pains of sleep," which, after a time of tyranny, shall leave us free and unharmed.

To Tresham's apprehension he still lay awake on his sofa, and he could distinctly mark each old familiar object in the apartment. In this state he saw the corse of her he loved stretched lonely on the middle of the floor. He looked in stupefied dismay; and then came in a crowd of people, some known to him as her friends and relations, but the greater part strangers, and the voice of woe arose, tears blinding the faces of those who wept, till they blurred and grew indistinct under his gaze. He strove to start up, but a heavy weight held him; and now the corse hung with death-locked clasp around his neck, its icy cheek laid at one moment close to his, and in the next removed, as the helpless head slipped off and dangled over his shoulder. He tried to scream, but, as is usual, without effect; and from a succession of such miseries Tresham awoke, haggard and very ill, in the morning light, to a certainty of real existence, that proposed no immediate balm to the sufferings he had undergone.

CHAPTER V.

EARLY on this morning, Mortimer called, by appointment with Maria, at Mr. Ruth's house. He found his mistress much agitated; she rose the moment he entered, and cast herself weeping into his arms.

"Tears, Maria! what has happened?"

"Oh, our poor Anna will go distracted, I think; such a scene as we had here last night, Mortimer! Tresham—for who can assent to the childish superstition they would force upon me?—Tresham came late in the evening in such a shocking way to frighten us all; acting the part of his own fetch—you know what the vulgar superstition is—sitting down in the drawing-room by Anna's side; there remaining motionless and speechless, and at last stalking away as he had entered, without a word of explanation."

"Did you see him?"

"No, I had just left Anna and the children together; returning to the drawing-room, I found it empty—the children were escaped in terror to the parlour: a servant attended me with lights, and as we stood a moment, wondering where all could have gone, a doleful scream reached us from the back drawing-room—the door was shut—I opened it—and discovered Anna lying senseless at the threshold."

"Alone?—was not Tresham with her?"

"No—nor in the house, nor have any of us seen him since; but Anna remains convinced it was his fetch, and has passed a dreadful night; indeed, Mortimer, I fear for—for her reason, if not for her life!" and the sister relapsed into showers of tears.

"The silly boy carries this too far, and must be checked," said Mortimer, after a remarkable pause; "where can he be found?"

"In his college rooms. But this seems to affect you differently from anything I could anticipate, Mortimer. I knew that Anna's indisposition, or any prospect of harm to her, would have grieved you, for all our sakes; but now I think you appear, along with your regret, to be moved by a kind of wonder and mystery; why did you pause so long, and look so absent, when I spoke of Treshams's rudeness?"

"It was nothing—nothing, indeed, Maria," he replied, with more endeavour to convince than the occasion required.

"And now I recollect," continued Maria, "I have another question, though I rather dislike to ask it—why did you start yesterday when you met him?"

"To speak very candidly, Maria, I had rather not answer you—not at present, at least; I know it is all folly—yet even folly grows dangerous by participation."

"You terrify me more than the story could; I entreat you to answer me."

"Then, to prevent worse, sit down with me and I shall. Previous to our breaking-up in America, we had an extensive encampment on the shores of one of those fine lakes that abound in the country. Almost the last night I spent in my tent, I remained up to a late hour. It was sultry weather, nd I suffered the entrance to be open, in order to enjoy the fresh breeze from the lake. After some writing and reading I reclined on a sofa, or a substitute for one, which, without facing the entrance, still allowed me, by turning a little

around, to contemplate a glorious effect of the setting moon upon the water. In this situation I thought I caught, with my side-sight, the figure of some person passing at the back of my couch. I turned rapidly round. No one was there; but, when I resumed my first position, I distinctly saw a stranger—and, what made it then most remarkable, not in uniform—standing outside the entrance, and looking steadfastly upon me. The features were so peculiar, and their expression so unusual, that both sank deep in my memory—that is, I thought they did."

"And Tresham's features brought them to your recollection?"

"Yes, for an instant; but, as I before said, I have since felt convinced of the absurdity of the mistake, and I pledge my word I now regard the whole as a delusion."

"Did you ever see that stranger again?"

"Never."

"Did you speak to him at the time?"

"No; for, on snatching my sword, and rising to challenge him for his name and purpose, he—it, I should rather say, or, in better words still, the whim of my own fancy, was no longer visible."

"And when did this occur?" asked Maria, now for the first time infected, in her turn, with a superstitious feeling.

"Perhaps three months ago, or more," he answered.

"I could heartily wish it had not happened," resumed his mistress, "'tis a most distressing coincidence."

Mortimer addressed himself to the task of assuaging Maria's fears, when Tresham rapidly entered, ghastly and wild in his face and manner, and out of breath with anxiety to see Anna once more before him.

"She is not here," he said, the moment he came in; "Good day, Maria—good day, Captain Mortimer—can Anna be seen, Maria?"

"I shall seek her for you," said Maria, glad to have an opportunity of consoling her sister with the news of Tresham's appearance, although when he entered, Maria felt more alarmed than pleased at the changed expression of his face:—"you may come with me to the garden, when I shall have got Anna down," she whispered to Mortimer, in passing him.

"I am sorry, Mr. Tresham," said Mortimer, as soon as they

were alone, "that almost our first word must be one of formality ; but I think you owe some explanation to the ladies of this house, for your strange conduct last night."

"I know it, sir, and came prepared to offer it," said Tresham, "and, to the lady who might have been particularly inconvenienced, I shall readily and anxiously apologize."

"Excuse my zeal, sir, but it was necessary."

"Oh, Captain Mortimer, in your place I might have so acted," said Tresham, indifferently, his whole soul bent on another subject.

"And you can also, perhaps, excuse my standing here, till I witness the explanation."

"Sir !—this is over-chivalrous, I think," said Tresham, more ruffled than at a less embarrassed moment he could have been. Mortimer was proceeding to further questioning when Maria re-entered, leading Anna by the hand.

The young lovers both started at the first sight of each other, their mutually disturbed and altered features, together with their mutual recollections of the past night, causing a common revulsion of feeling. But Maria whispering to Tresham— "She has been indisposed," he immediately recovered himself, and affectionately and gracefully advancing, said—

"My dearest Anna, you are resolved to chide me for my strange behaviour, last night ; but you will forgive me, when you hear me. I, too, was ill in the early part of the evening, and afterwards too stupid to explain, as I know I should have done."

"Ill, Harry !—oh ! I am sure you have been very ill !"—said Anna, fixing upon him her eyes, that, from an expression of wild agitation, had softened into tenderness, and now swam in tears ; and she held out her hand, and both turned to converse at a window.

"You hear, he has fully accounted for it, Maria," said Mortimer, also drawing his mistress aside.

"I think so—I am sure he has—and, I hope, to the entire satisfaction of Anna," Maria replied.

"Doubtless ; her full confidence returns, see—she speaks to him without any restraint," continued Mortimer.

"It is quite enough, I am convinced, for the present fears and affections of my poor sister ; and her natural anxiety about his health will serve to lull a crowd of smaller doubts and calculations of circumstances."

Here Tresham turned round, with—"Are you yet satisfied, Captain Mortimer?"

"Perfectly, brother, as you will permit a soldier again to call you."

"Now, my dear girl, are you not undeceived?" asked Maria, in a low tone, as the gentlemen discoursed.

"I believe I should be—and yet——"

"Come, come, Anna, there is no truth so bright, but a willing mind may blow a doubt upon it."

"I will pray to the good God to put it out of my mind—indeed I will," answered her sister. Mortimer now led Maria out, and Tresham and Anna remained together.

"How very poorly you do look, Harry," said Anna, after some indifferent conversation—"but come—the fine morning—if indeed you can attempt our old walk," she added, sorrowfully.

"I can now attempt anything," he interrupted, forcing a smile.

"Then let us be gone," she rejoined—"stay a moment, I will return equipped to accompany you."

She gained the door, turned to look at him—and—"terribly changed!" poor Anna added, as she left the apartment.

"How shall I make my all but certainty certain?" thought Tresham, now left alone; "I durst not ask herself if last night she ventured forth to the college,—such a question must imply or reveal the circumstances—and *that*, to an over-sensitive mind like her's, were no less than destruction; if, indeed, she has not been with me; if, indeed, it was the dreadful omen I fear it was!" for Tresham's morning recollections did not permit him to call back, with any reliance, the notion of another agency, and his whole mind was at length divided between the appalling question of a real or supernatural visit from his mistress. Occasionally, perhaps, there stole in a doubt of the reality, in either shape, of the appearance; but as this implied a doubt of his own infallibility, or of his power to decide on the certain operations of his own senses, Tresham's vanity and fanaticism rejected it whenever it occurred: and he was willing to be supremely miserable rather than suppose, in his own person, a delusion that many have experienced.

The idea of speaking in confidence to Maria presented itself; but a fear that one sister might keep nothing from the other, a jealousy of Maria's incredulity of supernatural matters,

of which he was well aware. together with a disinclination to give pain, joined to make him decline this course also. Tresham next thought of employing his servant; and perceiving, after a moment's reflection, no reasonable bar to such a course, he opened the parlour door and called Larry, who stood in his old place in the hall, and who, forgetting all his ecstasies of the night, had, at an early hour, shown himself in his master's chamber, calm, if not penitent or sorrowful, and without uttering a word, began a general shaking of phials, in order to compound a morning draught for the invalid: "so, Larry; you will speak with the housekeeper before you return? asked Tresham.

"If Mrs. Catty is willin'," said the attendant.

"Do so—and—as you converse together, contrive to ask her, carelessly, if"—Tresham paused.

"I know, sir; the—the lady," whispered Larry.

"Why, yes, discover at what hour the ladies generally retire for the night; in fact, at what hour they retired last night."

"Afore twelve, masther."

"Then you have already asked the question?"

"Not yet, sir; bud do we want a witch to tell us?"

"Peace; and obey me. I have already charged you, on your life, to conceal from every human being the circumstances you last witnessed in my chambers."

"An' so you did, sir, God bless you."

"Don't, at the peril of your life, divulge a sentence—a whisper, I will with my own hand——"

"Avoch, we know all that; an' we thank you."

"Larry?" Tresham looked angrily at him.

"An' for the same raison we'll take good care," continued Larry, moving towards the door.

"Stop a moment—you followed me out?"

"I think I remember it," replied the servant.

"Did you observe anything?"

"Not at that present time, sir; but afther."

"That is, when you went down stairs?"

"I believe so."

"Well—what did you notice—and where?"

"When I got to the top o' the stairs, her ladyship's raverence standin' at the bottom."

"Did you descend that flight?"

"Ay, sir, God help me."

"And then?"

"An' then her grace was on the next landing-place; under me still; an' then on the next; an' so on 'till she vanished round a pillar in the great hall, houldin' up her finger as much as to say—no farther, Larry, if you're not out o' sorts with the little life I've left you: I didn't take her advice, but was fur goin' into my room, when, just as I had my hand on the latch, an' the door open, I fell over her in the dark, where she stretched at last, a could stiff corpse, across the threshold."

The student shuddered as this brought to his recollection the throes of his own wretched sleep.

"Were you tipsy last night?" he asked in a moment after.

"Why, then, not over an' above," was the answer.

Tresham remained silent. "I may go to Mrs. Catty, sir?"

"Aye, hang or drown—or damn!" replied Tresham.

"Avoch, we thank you kindly;" and Larry withdrew.

"Mysterious power!" thus arose the aspirations of Tresham's heart, while he remained alone. "Great cause and common Father, who sendest thy signs and revealings for preparation, make this untrue! Summon not yet—oh, not yet! from thy beautiful world, the fairest and gentlest being thou hast sent to adorn it; oh! it is thrice terrible to stand by a creature so fair—to hear her voice—touch her hand—and see her shining and breathing near us, yet know that, in the house of death, the dim dead await her, counting every pulsation of her heart, till that which shall complete the fatal number." He wept and spread his hands over his face, and was thus surprised by the hasty entrance of Anna.

"Now, Harry—but why are you agitated?" she said.

"A passing pain, my love—'tis gone."

"Entirely gone?" she continued, advancing and taking his hand, her mind wrung with pangs of the very same nature of her lover's.

"Oh, yes!" he replied, smiling faintly, as with action that betokened a mixture of deep love, sorrow, and almost reverence, he breathed a kiss on her beautiful forehead.

"Let us have our walk, then," Anna resumed, "and for your sake we shall walk slowly Harry:—but tell me;" and she stopped at the door—"I think you yesterday said that

you were, yourself, a melancholy authority for the truth of—— fetches."

"I spoke to that effect, indeed," said Tresham, scarcely able to conceal his emotion.

"Indeed!" resumed Anna, echoing his word with an alarmed tone—"there is a deep meaning in everything you say—let me ask you how?"

"Some other time, my beloved—or after our walk—the morning wears away—some other time"—and offering his arm he strove with poor smiles to disguise his own heart, and comfort hers.

"It must be now, Tresham," said Anna, disengaging herself, and sinking in the chair, while she earnestly motioned him to sit beside her. Influenced by the solemnity, if not command, of her tone and manner, Tresham, after a pause, obeyed.

"I had an elder brother. He was, too, my only brother. He went with Wolfe to America, and I remained in my father's house. Many months elapsed after his departure before we received any letter from him, and our anxieties rose very high. One night I dreamt a dream—one night that, in tears, and misery on his account—for I loved him as my own heart's blood—I had lain down in bed. I was in a street, in a strange town, and followed, I knew not how, in the mournful train of a soldier's funeral. The roll of the muffled drums, and the occasional thump of the great drum, together with the shrill, and always to me, heart-rending hymn or lament, played by the fifes on such occasions, filled my ears, and I wept even before I had a more immediate cause for sorrow. After some time the dream changed. I was in a lofty church, also strange to me. I looked around; the mouth of a vault was open, and a coffin, that which I had followed, lay near to it. I advanced, and looked upon the coffin-lid, and the name of my brother, with his age, and the date of his death-day, now met my eyes, printed in black letters on a ground of white metal. I shrieked and awoke! It was past midnight. I arose, got a light, and, from the distinct and vivid perceptions of my dream, made in my commonplace book, which I will show you, a sketch of the coffin and inscription. The date by an inconsistent anticipation of the vision, was of the next day after the dream. But it was the true day," added Tresham, in a sunk voice.

"He died on that day, then?" Anna asked, and her lover assented by a mournful inclination of the head.

"But, Tresham," she resumed, "this is a dream, and not a fetch story," and Anna felt and looked relieved.

"Listen. I have commenced with this, only for the purpose of leading to the matter at point. After the close of the next evening I sat alone, in my study. I should, indeed, say it was night, though not far advanced into the night. A figure came before me. Wrecked and wretched as he stood, I knew my brother! The figure, when, for a moment it had shot its unearthly eyes into my soul, passed through a door to an inner chamber, from which there is no returning but back again into that it had left. Thither I followed, locking the door after me, that the vision and I might be alone, together."

"Horrible!" said Anna, drawing in her breath.

"Thither I followed—but saw nothing. And I never saw my brother more! That night, and that hour, he expired in America."

"That hour and night!"

"Yes. As in the former case, I took a note of the day of the month and week, and the hour of the night, at which the fetch had appeared to me; and our minute and authentic accounts afterwards pointed to the very moment."

"'Tis dreadful. Come—this morning is far advanced;" and Anna, suppressing her feelings, and trying to hide them under the appearance of a bustling arrangement of her dress, rose up.

"Dreadful it is, Anna—but oh, too true! This has affected you; or, you are more seriously indisposed than to my inquiries you will admit—or—or—have watched late last night—oh, Anna!" Tresham continued, as, over-wrought and almost thrown off his guard by the increased conflict of his recollections and terrors, he was on the point of asking a solution of what he most feared and doubted. He grasped her hand—looking into her eyes—but in a moment checked himself, and extending his arm—"Come, then, our walk!" he said, and led his mistress out.

CHAPTER VI.

MEANTIME, Larry, in obedience to his master's commands, obtained a tête-à-tête with Mrs. Catherine. It may have been observed, from this person's former style of conversation with Larry, that, either she thought he had a tender inclination for her, and saw no reason for discouraging it, or she wished to inspire him with one, and was therefore very sweet on honest Larry. What may have been his opinion on the point it is hard to say; but, on the whole, we rather predicate that he had a general apprehension of the state of Mrs. Catherine's heart, or of the drift of her politeness, and affected, accordingly, the utmost innocence and unconsciousness.

In truth, the housekeeper was arrived at, if she had not passed the grand climacteric, under the influence of which, with reverence be it spoken, ladies of all ranks feel disposed to do strange and startling things, rather than any longer run the chance of a certain odium. Nature had not been as bountiful to Mrs. Catherine's face, as to her undisputed talent for jellies, jams, pickled mushrooms, and conserves of every description, and, during her unlovely youth, the virgin, yet too green to stoop to a renouncement of her sex's privilege by originating any solicitation, remained unwooed and, of course, unwon. After the pure and peaceful lapse of nearly twenty years, she began, however, to look about her; and, despising the scruples of her teenish days, bluntly, or adroitly, ventured many a "bold stroke for a husband." That she had hitherto failed, her present anxious situation made known—notwithstanding the matronly affixture to her familiar name, which, by the way, was of long standing, and a cruel anticipation, by the world at large, of a fate which Mrs. Catherine neither courted, nor, indeed, merited—and we record the fact, rather in astonishment of the blindness of man, than with any triumph over the unwilling maiden.

At the time that it is to our purpose to become eavesdroppers on the conversation between her and Larry, we discover the valet evincing considerable uneasiness at a chance remark that fell from his admirer:—"And—what? eh? last night, Kitty?—how, Kitty?" he said.

"I tould you once afore, Larry, as much as that I thought my name sounded betther another way. But no matter for that, only as the hereafter may be; I say he cum here last night, stalkin' in, an' stalkin' out, like his own ghost, an' never sayin' a Christhen word, but lavin' my poor Miss Anny stone dead on the carpet."

"An' deliver us from all evil!" muttered Larry, concluding aloud a prayer he had, in his consternation, mentally begun. This rather discomposed his friend, and she inquired —"Didn't he come? didn't he? oh, Larry, honey, didn't he come? or, as Miss Anny said, was it his fetch, indeed?"

"I see my way in a vartuous lie," thought Larry, afraid, as much as he was cautious of the black secret of which he thus thought himself possessed: to Mrs. Kitty, he continued— "In troth an' he did; an' for why, no?—an' what use of a man's ghost, when his own flesh an' blood is ready an' willin' to stand in his place, Catherine?"

"Then he *did* come?"

"He did, to be sure; an' myself had to wait for him an hour at the college."

"Musha, good loock to your heart for that, Larry; I said it to Miss Anny all along, an' now I can make her so sure, entirely, poor thing!"

"Arrah, do now, Catherine, an' God 'ill bless you."

"Faith, an' I will then, an' more an' more for your axin' it, Larry. But, Larry, agra, you're in grief, killin' grief—he's quite changed since yesterday, poor fellow," continued Mrs. Kate, in a reverie: "he thinks there's sich a differ between us; but he's a claner boy nor that big rap, Paddy Kinshela, that passed me by in the chapel-yard, last Sunday se'nn't, after last Mass; a better boy, too, an' a gentleman's own man—Larry, a-vich, never let it break your heart, I say," she concluded, again addressing him.

"What does she mane at all?"—queried Larry to his own breast—"did I tell her yet?—Musha, I'm a blind kitten aff I think I did."

"Take courage, man; 'a faint heart never won a fair lady;' out with it; what kills, cures," continued the housekeeper.

"Does she want to pump me?—two words to that bargain?" reasoned Larry.—"Catherine"——

"Well, honey?—he looks just as if he'd come down with

it at once," added Catherine to herself—"only for his modesty, an' all that."

"Aff a simple boy might ax you, Catt—Catherine, what o'clock do you all go to bed at, in this house?"

"There's a round beginnin', tho', after all his modesty!"—thought Mrs. Catherine, chuckling in her very heart. "Why, then, to tell the truth, Larry, one may say about eleven, tho,' sense you must know all, myself sometimes stays up, at one matter or another, after the young ladies, good loock to them; an' a weary hour I have of it, Larry; for of all the hours from Monday mornin' to Saturday night that we poor sarvint women know, there isn't one so lonesome entirely, or one that gives us the heart-scald so well as that; it's then we think of all we have to do an' look after, an' all the odds an' ends we have to put together, an' divil a drop, God forgive me for swarin', to rise our hearts, for we never taste it alone. Och! musha, you know little about it; a noise frightens us, an' it's only the big red cat, an' no sweetheart, after all; instid of one like him to be talkin' to us, the window goes backwards an' forwards with the wind; if a scratchin' comes to the dour, it's only a rat as big as a calf, an' thin the clock strikes twelve to warn us of going to bed an' gettin' up ever so early; an' so we say our prayers for nothin', an' lie down in our bed as cowld as anything."

"Musha, more's the pity; an' myself is long sorry for your lonesome hour—about eleven, isn't it, one time with another?—*they* never stir, after!"

"Between ourselves, Larry, hardly ever; an' my sarvice to you, Larry," continued the housekeeper, sipping a glass of cordial, after she had filled and pushed another to the valet—"barrin' some odd nights; some out-o'-the-way nights, like last night, now——"

"Avoch, ay: sure I know you were all up late, last night," said Larry, very simply, while he drank to Mrs. Catherine's health.

"Oh, the prowlin' dog! he saw the light at my windee!"—surmised Mrs. Kate to herself—"yes, indeed, Larry; I wasn't in my bed till after twelve."

"An' the ladies afore you, by coorse?"

"Ay, faith, Larry, honey, more nor half an hour."

"An'—my sarvice to you, Catherine—case, a body axed, if people that can love ever step out o'nights, when the family are snug asleep, to whisper a bit with their sweethearts!"

"Oh, the impident thief! the plotter! the brazen-faced fellow!" she inwardly ejaculated—"Musha, Larry, agra, you have no shame in you, nor no fear o' God or me; an' yet, to be genteel with you, I may say—tho' *I* say it that shouldn't —that supposin' myself here, loved so well, entirely, as to do the likes, faith I might step out, for a start, into the garden, or a thing that a-way."

"An' unknownst to any one?" asked Larry.

"Musha, yes, unknownst to the wide world, Larry; that is, case why, I liked a body; for likin', you know, goes a good way; tho' for that matter, it 'ud well become me to be on the look out, as the ladies sleep so near me."

"Do they faith? aha, Kitty! so *you* might, only if you liked an' they couldn't, if you didn't like it, too? isn't that the way it is?"

"Sure enough, Larry, a-vich."

"So, Catherine, there's last night, now, you might, if you liked, an' none of them might, if they liked? an', I'll be bound, you could give your oath, for every night in the year, that, down to this blessed moment, they never tried any sich thing."

"Aye, my book oath; why, you're a witch, Larry."

"I'm a conjuror's walley-the-shambles," answered Larry to himself; "or I sarve two masthers, or a limb of the divil; an' when he's married," he went on, beginning unknown to himself, to articulate his thoughts—"then I'm to sarve two misthresses, into the bargin:" and he groaned aloud.

The word married reached, above all that he had muttered, Mrs. Catherine's ear, and his groaning affected her with an ungovernable commiseration; so that now assuming her softest tone she said: "But Larry, jewel, I'm for rather givin' a spare hour, here, at our own fire, snug an' warm—the best nights are couldish, Larry—than in the out-o'-dour way you spake of."

Larry was silent. In fact, he heard her not.

"So that, Larry, if a body tapped as low as anything at this little windee about half after eleven to-night—Musha what ails him?" she continued to herself—"if ever I saw sich a man in love in my whole life afore!—but it's the truest love"—then aloud—"or, as for the matter o' that, an' sense you're for spakin' so soon about comin' together in the buckle and tongue way, Larry, sure there's Father O'Shoughnessy that we both know ——"

"Bother!" interrupted Larry, on whose abstracted sense the last serious words had made some confused impression; and he rose up.

"Bother!" echoed Mrs. Catherine, "why, you good for nothin' thief, would you wrong me, that-a-way? ax me your questions, an' then say, bother!"

"Catty," said Larry, manning himself with gravity and dignity; "I'm a boy, d'ye see me, to cry bother whin, an' where, an' how I like, sooner nor make away with my mother's son."

"Make away!" Mrs. Catherine repeated, also rising, after having first snatched back the second untasted glass she had filled for her imaginary lover; her face assuming, from its first furnace-glow, a livid paleness, and her lips sharing the angry convulsion that shook her whole body.

"Make away! och, I'll larn you to do that! get out you—you—" spasms of anger choked her further speech, or the epithets she thought worthy of Larry were not so easily found, or her mighty conceptions were too big for utterance. "you—you—" she repeated, clenching her hands by her side, stamping her foot, and gradually advancing on Larry, who, however, was not to be had in such a way; for, from the moment Mrs. Catherine snatched his glass of cordial, he foresaw the coming storm, and arranged to avoid it, taking, for every step she advanced on him, as good a step backward, till at last, and ere she had power to use tongue or claws, he was over the threshold, and the door was banged in his face.

"Well, a-vich; glory, honour, an' praise for all," he afterwards soliloquised, in Christian patience, on his way to college; "an' yet, here's one poor boy, like me, in the course of one night an' mornin', visited an' bet to chaff by ould Nick put on a ghost hunt; sent to hang, drown, or go to be brilee by his jewel of a masther, an' now trated in this manner by an ugly woman.

"Well. Any more o' the yarn? My name is Larry, an' keeps with an evil deception, a divil's make-believe, a divi entirely, I think, that puts on my masther, that he ma make sure of my masther's man. But if it's not himsel where did I lose him? Did we lave him after us abroad or—thonom-on-dhoul!—was he never with me at-all-at-all?—I'll make him say the Lord's prayer along wid myself, thi

holy and blessed night, which no imp daars do—an' I'll have none of his beginnin' at the wrong end, either—ay, I'll do this, or ax my death for not knowin' my catechism."

CHAPTER VII.

THE young lovers took their morning walk. Romantic minds will seek out romantic and lonesome scenery, and Tresham and Anna, declining the more frequented promenade that followed the windings of the Nore, at the side opposite the college, chose a wilder path, upon which they arrived, after walking through a crowded and disagreeable suburb. It was locally called "the Lacken" (a term expressive, we believe, of precipitous ground, when it overhangs water), and also led along the banks of the Nore, facing the public walk, but was sufficiently distant to escape intrusive observation, and offer all the pleasures of free discourse.

In the helps that it gave for enjoying prospects of the beautiful and peculiar scenery of the distant town and accompaniments, this walk had another advantage over its fashionable rival. Sometimes ascending half way, and sometimes entirely to the tops of a chain of precipitous hills, that for more than a mile attended its course, it alternately supplied picture and bird's-eye views ; and, at its various well-known points of sight, Tresham and Anna often lingered, pleased to divert, though in silence, their mutual depression of spirits, by gratification in the least sensual way of, perhaps, the most sensual of our perceptive organs.

From a particular spot they dwelt long on a singularly fine view. To their left, in the middle distance, arose the old Ormond Castle, now displayed in its separate parts,—that is to say, two circular towers connected by a comparatively low line of building, in the centre of which was a spacious archway, the entrance to the court-yard ; from one of the towers, and at about right angles with the first-mentioned sweep, approached, in perspective, an imposing mass of the edifice, commonly regarded as the castle's front, shooting up, over the roof, a battalion of Gothic chimneys, and abounding, as

did also the two towers, and the roof, in square or angular-topped windows of various size, round each of which was an indented edging, painted white upon a cool gray ground, the pervading colour of the pile. It would be difficult to assign this building to any order of architecture, classic or Gothic; still some features of both, the gradual intermixture of different eras, appeared; much of the character of an old dwelling-house, independent of either, might also be traced through it, but on so large a scale as not to take away the more important idea of a castle; it was, altogether, a noble and picturesque object; and there it sat upon its green lawn, and amid its rich trees, visible from the foundations over a flanking wall of forty feet high, at the base of which swept the public walk, still rising many feet from the bed of the river; and at last shone out the unruffled river, narrowing as it curved round the college park in the distance, but spreading as it came nearer; those stony barriers that cause a fulness of stream for manufacturing purposes, checking it at two different stages, and forming, alternately, a placid lake or reservoir, and shooting falls of foamy, roaring water; a different river from what it was when Spenser sung it—

> —— "The stubburne Neure whose waters gray,
> By fair Kilkenny and Rosponte bord."

To the right of the castle came in—as a painter would say—bits of the town, caught through masses of foliage; in nearly the middle of the picture arose two spires, one of St. Mary's church, the other of the market-house; lower down in the same line was the old college, bounding its park, and half seen through trees still; yet further to the right appeared the grotesque steeple of the cathedral of St. Canice, and, by its side, one of the highest of those famous round towers, of which the purpose, era, and, indeed, entire history, remain a puzzle to antiquaries; and, as at the left hand the picture commenced with the Ormond Castle, it was balanced, at the right, by another old fabric, about equi-distant, but in ruins, and with a freedom of touch that even a master can only imitate, painted, by the pencil of time, into every variety of brown, gray, and yellow tint. We have said that, as they swept to the right from the castle, the houses of the town were only occasionally seen through intercepting foliage;

this feature ran over the whole scene, so as scarcely to give the idea of a busy haunt of men, nearly two miles in extent; and thus the curious eye had a rare subject of city and landscape going hand in hand; of nature and art; of embowering solitude and hidden bustle; of the freshness of God's work, and the pilings-up of man's labour. Behind the whole middle distance of spires, towers, glinting slate roofs, trees, and water, rose the more distant country, sloping and swelling, spotted with villas and plantations, and bathed in the blending mist and sunshine of the morning; and farther still, appeared doubtful lines of blue mountain, brought out or mixed with the wreathed clouds, according to the changes of the dazzling light and swimming atmosphere. Notwithstanding that it was the hour for kindling fires in every town and city the world over, no foul interfusion of smoke dimmed the brilliance of this favoured view; Kilkenny being protected from such a nuisance by a clause of the old proverb (quoted even by Ledwich) that blesses her with "water without mud, land without bog, fire without smoke, and streets paved with marble;" so that a summer-morning sun and air sparkled and wafted over the lightsome and unique beauty of the scene, as freshly as it might have done over far and uninhabited solitudes.

The lovers pursued their walk along hill and river, narrow path and green sward, until they at last reached a plantation of old trees, known by the name of "the wilderness," where the near noise of waters came upon their ears, and all else was repose.

They sat on a shelving bank that had the boiling stream below, and the gnarled oak overhead; both were unusually silent. Even the charms of the scenery, as they came along, had not had power, however they might have mutually enjoyed it, to provoke much observation from either; Tresham spoke not a word; while Anna's voice, when she ventured a remark, sounded tremulous and broken. They continued for some time watching the bubbles that, self-blown and self-burst, chased each other away, and were no more: a fit image of the troubled and vain thoughts which occupied the minds of both. At last, after many catching efforts to begin, Anna abruptly broke silence:—

"Might not that appearance of your brother be a delusion, Harry? Might not a mind filled as yours was, by your fears

and previous dream, with one object, paint it to the eye so vividly as to deceive the eye?"

"Perhaps;" he inwardly shrunk as he spoke, "yet, according to the consistency of things, certainly not; a mere delusion, such as you mean, would be more fleeting, more undefined, more general, more unreal, and, above all, less capable of the continued deceit of continued action, than a fetch, such as it is described to us—and—indeed, such as I have—once—seen it."

"You told me the other day you had been considering a theory to prove, on consistent grounds, the reality of fetches; I should like to hear it now, Harry."

"It would be too long and complex for your attention," he said, painfully anxious to avoid the torment he had created for himself. But Anna seemed resolved that the childish scourge his own weak hands had prepared, should visit his proper back; as to herself, her mind was in that battling state of suspense that urges to tempt the worst certainty rather than remain in doubt.

"I am not the mere girl your answer would seem to make me, Harry: I can here mention the preparatory argument which you told me should go before the direct proof. Did you not say it was necessary to begin by showing that the creatures and scenery of our dreams are not the imaginings of the mind, but real beings which occur to our waking souls, or through which our souls wander for the time?"

"That is the first step, indeed," he answered, somewhat beguiled by the flippancy of his mistress, "and it gives me inexpressible pleasure thus to witness the gradual arrangement of your naturally fine mind, Anna;" and Tresham kissed his pupil.

"Then go on, at once, with your theory," she resumed; "first make me understand the system of dreams; I shall listen attentively."

Tresham's love and vanity balancing his more bitter feelings, he obeyed this command; and, in order to show the kind of boyish puzzle with which he was in the habit of tantalizing his own and his mistress's intellect, his theory is preserved.

"If dreams happen in the mind, they are its acts. That is a simple proposition, and one easily understood."

"I understand it perfectly."

"There cannot be an act of the mind without the mind's own knowledge. You might as well suppose animal motion without life; for, in truth, consciousness is the life of the mind; without it you not only can have no mental act, but you destroy mind itself. I think—that is—*I know* I think—and therefore I am—was the brief but profound syllogism of a great philosopher, who spent years in an inquiry after his own possible existence. You follow me, Anna?"

"Every step. Proceed."

"Thus, then, the mind never acts but when it knows it acts. Recollect that. There is an after operation by which it can assure itself it has acted; and another by which it perfectly remembers the knowledge it had of its own act while performing it; and both are as necessary as the first to stamp any act as its own, to satisfy it; for, unless it be thus satisfied, it has not acted at all. Can you show me, by an illustration, that you understand this?"

"Yes—I think I can. This morning, very early, I wished to see you before me. That wish was an act of my mind; first, because I knew I was wishing at the time; secondly, because I now remember that knowledge; and thirdly, because I can call up the wish as my own. Am I right?"

"Perfectly. Let us take another step. Belonging to these necessary tests for ascertaining its own act, are smaller powers of the mind, which may be exercised whenever the great ones are exercised: and one of these is its assent to continued action, or its capability to break up continued action at pleasure; to change, or stop it altogether. For instance, if a man is thinking of a horse's head, he may, if he chooses, change his thought to the spire of a steeple, before he has proceeded to consider any other part or limb of the animal; or, if his ideas range over the side of a mountain, he may rapidly transfer them to a crowded street before they have extended themselves to the summit of the mountain. Is this plain?"

"Nothing can be more so."

"Now, then, we have to try a dream by these rules, and so decide whether or not it is an act of the mind, occurring in the mind. Has the mind any such attendant consciousness of dreams? any such after-recognition of them? Certainly not. I particularly speak of continuous dreams; not the snatchings of a second; not points of action; but such as are

made up of the flowing of those points into connected lines of performance. And here we see the *human mind* admitting its non-consent to the action of a dream; its want of power to have accompanied it, to have broken it up, to have changed or stopped it. But all these privileges it should have necessarily possessed in order to stamp the dream as its own act. Possessing none of them, the dream cannot be its act; cannot have happened in it; and is consequently an occurrence distinct from the human mind. I appeal to your own recollections and experience, Anna."

"What you have said is very clear. I cannot deny it. Yet I have a difficulty. Only one person can have one particular dream. If it is not the act of his own mind, it must be the act of some other—some—I am getting a little confused—of some other individual. So, here is another person dreaming my dreams, and—" continued the metaphysical girl, with a half smile and whole blush—"I do not understand this, Tresham."

"Nor is it natural you yet should; you have all the merit, however, of seeing the difficulty: and it remains for me, by my new system, to reconcile this obvious contradiction in the old one."

"Then since we have seen that dreams are not the acts of the mind, you must show an impossibility, by still connecting them with the individual who dreams them."

"The thing is far from impossible. Attend.

"Every human individual is composed of three distinct parts—namely, body, mind, and soul; the soul as different from mind as mind is from body; the soul immortal; mind as well as body mortal, and to perish with it; the soul created before both, and to live after both, independent of everything but God: and here, in the better part of our present selves, is our future and better existence; an existence of full apprehension, unshackled by the mechanism of mind; by reasoning, recollecting, or combining."

"That gives me a new, and awful, and sublime idea," interrupted Anna.

"But, by a decree of God," continued Tresham, "we live on this earth less by our soul than by our mind and body; that is, in the compound machine, man, mind and body predominate over soul: and although it is the true intellectual prompter, the source of perception and power, we can only

become conscious of its workings and nature at the pleasure of the mind, to which it is always bound to communicate itself, and which lamely and imperfectly remodels such communication. By an inscrutable decree, man is thus doomed to know and estimate himself for a time, by the predominance of an inferior portion of his mixed being only."

"It is wonderful and beautiful!" said Anna, her cheeks and eyes lit up.

"This thraldom of the soul must continue during life, with the exception of snatches of freedom, which it enjoys when the mind and body suffer the temporary death of sleep. But, then—as after their final death it shall escape into everlasting liberty—the never-winking spirit sometimes eludes its vulgar and tyrannic keepers, being compelled by destiny to return home to its house of bondage so soon as the mind and body recover their inertness: in other words, so soon as they are awake. And now, Anna, we approach our preparatory point.

"In this state of occasional freedom the soul wanders alone, and independently, over the universe. Other disenthralled souls meet it, and then we have the people of dreams: it visits other places, and then we have their scenery."

The pupil looked wise and puzzled in a breath, and paused too long for the vanity of the lecturer; but at last took heart to say—

"If dreams happen apart from the mind, how does it afterwards know anything, even imperfectly, about them?"

"I have said that the soul is obliged to return to its union with the mind the instant it and the body resume life. I have also said that a like necessity urges the soul to hold continued converse with the mind, during which it must impart all its acts. Upon its return home, then, as it were, it recounts its adventures. The mind, along with a natural incapacity ever clearly to conceive the operations of the soul, is now but half recovered from its lethargy, and admits the relation in an indistinct manner, and as indistinctly recollects it. Here I may instance the vague and jumbled notion we always have of dreams. We call them back rather as the acts of another individual, than of ourselves; we confound persons, places, time and space, cause and effect. The soul only saw causes; the mind must drudge from cause to effect; the soul began where the mind ends; for causes are first to spirit and last to mind; with one first is first; with the other last is first."

This happy conflict of terms completely bewildered Anna, and she admitted everything.

"But now," she resumed, "let me hear how, by the application of this theory, you are able as rationally to account for—fetches;" and Anna's voice, and the expression of her countenance, changed, as this one talismanic word chased away all her scientific enthusiasm, and awakened her to human feelings. Tresham, also, in an altered tone, continued:—

"You are convinced that, after death, the soul parts the mind and body, and enjoys perfect freedom; you are further certain that, because sleep is a temporary death of mind, the soul has, during sleep also, opportunity for some hours of enfranchisement. Any other cause, then, which, for a moment, deadens the mind, must allow the soul a momentary liberty, during which it may leave the body, and become visible in another place, no matter how distant. Severe bodily pain, or exhaustion, will produce this benumbing effect on the mind; and thus, under a visitation of either, the soul may for an instant separate itself from the mind and body, and give the appearance called a fetch. It is remarkable," concluded Tresham, shuddering as he uttered the sentence, while Anna partook of his horror, "that, whenever a fetch is seen, it represents some person at that moment indisposed."

"Hoity-toity! riddle-me-ree! and long life to cosmogony and abracadabra!" now shouted a stentorian voice at their back; and, turning round, the lovers saw their old friend, Doctor Butler, who, not finding Tresham in his chambers, when, according to appointment with Larry, he made an early visit, had pursued the student hither, in some honest professional indignation that his commands should have been disobeyed.

"For heaven's sake, my good young people, have you nothing to do with your prêcious time? Here have I stood for some minutes wondering if I heard two accomplished persons, come to years of discretion, or two great children broke out of the nursery, mutually imposing on each other's common sense. My pretty Miss Anna, these are no topics for you. As for you, Harry Tresham, I have a crow to pluck with you—but what's the matter now? What, but a result of obstinacy and disobedience?" he continued, assisting Anna

to support her lover, who, more ill than to himself he would allow, grew faint in the effort to rise. "Lean on me, Harry—there—you are better; and now home to a late breakfast; the worst meal that ever entered a boy's stomach."

They retraced their steps to the town. At the entrance Dr. Butler whispered to Tresham—"I shall call on you to-day, at three; do not disappoint me—I breakfast near this place—" and parted. The lovers proceeded; and Tresham left his mistress at her father's door, solemnly engaging, at her request, to call early in the evening. "Be punctual," she continued, with a faint smile, "if you do not wish to see me lose all sense of shame, and invade your retirement."

CHAPTER VIII.

"In this matter, Harry," said Dr. Butler, when he had made the appointed visit, "you will permit me to use more than common authority: first, there is clearly my professional right to command obedience; then I am an old man, and ought to command it; and lastly, I am your good father's old friend, and would serve, as I love him, your father's son; and, in fact, I must predominate," he added, stamping with a good-humoured air of dictation, his celebrated black cane against the carpet.

"I am grateful for your kindness, Mr. Butler."

"No, sir, you are not; for, if you were, my wishes and injunctions together would not have been despised; yet last night you went a ghost-hunting, and this morning a philosophizing in their teeth; and you see the consequences; an increased attack, since you came home, with—for I shall speak out—symptoms very alarming."

"It is nothing, my dear doctor: I shall mend."

"Veritably, yes, if I can help it; but you know I have prescriptive right to be the more obstinate of the two, and it must be exactly in my own way and no other. Or, Mr. Harry Tresham, tell me at once you resolve to be your own physician, and, though with sorrow and regret

on my part, we may soon cease to be troublesome to each other."

"God forbid I should be so wayward, Mr. Butler."

"Well, then, God forbid I should be so malicious as to give you up to yourself: so, come; in the first place, no stirring out to-night, or until I shall have approved of locomotion: agreed?"

"Agreed," said Tresham, with a deep sigh—"I will write a note of apology to Mr. Ruth's, and my servant shall deliver it."

"So far, so good. Next, then, no books; no stewing of any kind; and, least of all, over the German fairy-tales—agreed also?"

"Also," repeated Tresham, "though I scarcely know, Doctor Butler, what books you honour with that name."

"No matter; we shan't stick at words; and now with respect to your regimen; I have taken my vegetable dinner with you here to-day, and indeed staid too late from another appointment, in order to set you a good example in your hermit diet; and it must continue during my pleasure; wine, strong liquors of all kinds, and even simple old whiskey-punch also to disappear. And now, where is your servant to take the note?"

Tresham rang to command Larry's attendance.

"Apropos of this same Larry, as you call him; I do not know a more entertaining rascal; I think he fears ghosts, and all the et ceteras, as a mad dog, water: only the canine lunatic has, even in the shallowness of his bugbear, a better excuse for being nervous: you cannot imagine what a fine scene I had with him here in your unadvised absence, last night; 'twas the first time we met, and I saw by his looks and manner that he took me for the devil the moment I entered the room; and we afterwards discussed metaphysics to some purpose."

"Could he indeed have consented to such an illusion? Something of the kind I now recollect he mentioned to me; but I supposed he jested."

"Jested! never was certainty more certain; I see you have no notion how a weak and contemptible mind can impose on itself; but as I humoured the idiot's prepossession the instant I perceived it, and left him with it fully established in the space inside his skull, we can still, with your leave, follow up

the scene ; I hear his foot on the stairs, and there is twilight enough for our purpose. It is a good opportunity to lecture master and man," added Butler in his own mind.

"You have my full consent, doctor."

"Then I shall just step behind this screen : do you get him to stand away from the door, so that I may intercept his retreat, and then judge for yourself ; he doesn't know I have come in."

As Larry entered the apartment, Butler had established himself in his position, and, according to arrangement, Tresham got the valet also favourably placed, and began to write a note. After a moment's pause, the doctor stole softly behind Larry, and laid his hand on his shoulder ; a quick turn round, a spring towards the door, a shout, and then a run close to the wall, when he found his retreat cut off, were the immediate results. Tresham only looked up, recognised Butler with a slight nod, and resumed his writing, while the doctor closed on Larry.

"Spake to the masther, sir—spake to him, Masther Harry —ye know more of aich other nor what I do,"—exclaimed the alarmed servant, with more courage, however, derived either from his doubts of his tormentor's identity, or from his not now being alone, than had marked their former interview. Tresham took no notice.

"Lives your melancholy mother yet, Larry ?" said Butler, very near him.

"In spite of all, yes—plaise your worship," answered the abhorring, yet temporizing valet.

"I must see her, Larry, in common charity, for *I* can be charitable ; indeed, all your kith-and-kin of that branch; you'll be a merrier family after me."

"They may laugh that win, sir," replied Larry.

"Winners, then, you shall be, depend on it. To begin with yourself ; how much do you think you should want ?"

"I wants nothin' at all, your honour, while I have an honest masther, an' knows how to bless myself."

"That is to say you will take nothing from me ?"

"Myself isn't for throublin' your rev——worship, I mane."

"So ; how many keys between laugh major and laugh minor, Larry ?" The black cane made a slight motion, and

Larry emitted a strange "hi, hi," while Tresham again looked up, astonished at the novelty of the sounds.

"Hi, hi! and is this all?" said Butler, sternly.

"Hi, hi, ho!"

"Say these words after me:—I, Larry—what's your villanous name?"

"Larry O'Donohoo, sir."

"I, Larry O'Donohoo, hereby laugh at all the ghosts, my master or myself ever talked of." Larry endeavoured to mince the matter, and Butler added:—

"What, you lump of a rascal! say the words plain, or I'll make a hole in your head to let some brains in;" and the servant at last faithfully complied. "Very well; and with your permission, Mr. Tresham, we shall now send him on the errand we spoke of."

"How far might it be off, Master Harry?" inquired Larry.

"What's that to you, man? do you dare dispute our united commands?" exclaimed Butler.

"Myself only wants to know where I'm for goin', first," observed Larry, in some horrible misgiving.

"Here, Larry, said Tresham, who, on account of the allusion to himself during this scene, now wished from wounded vanity to end it—"here, sir, this note to Mr. Ruth's for Miss Anna;" Larry hastily took it, and by a roundabout manœuvre gained the door.

"And one note for me before you go," resumed Butler; but the persecuted servant, conceiving himself beyond the limits of the charmed circle, only answered with a gruff "bother!" and "I don't care a blackberry for you, sowl or body, whoever you are;" and then went down stairs as fast as possible.

Butler laughed heartily, and turning to Tresham—"Farewell, Harry; I leave you with my commands to get to bed immediately; nor need you—ay, your very self—defraud the nursery by conjuring the ghost from it this blessed night."

"Sir?" interrupted Tresham.

"Come, come, never mind me; we all know your insanity as well as yourself, and well enough to be entertained by it; only it is believed that your accomplished and respectable man-servant carries the method of the disease to more perfection; farewell, to-morrow morning early I will revisit you," and the doctor retired, well pleased with the offence he had

given to Tresham's prejudices, and resolved, though he would not intimate his purpose, to surprise the student with another call that night.

Of all the injunctions laid upon him by his medical friend, Tresham thought least of obeying that which would consign him to his pillow at such an early hour. Sleep, he concluded, was completely out of the question; so, till the return of his servant, he reclined on the sofa, pondering, over again, the mysteries of the former night.

From Larry's report of his conversation with the housekeeper, Tresham had been able to extract nothing; as in fact that afflicted person did not think proper, from motives of affection, perhaps, as well as prudence, to be very communicative. He rather conveyed, on the whole, an impression that Anna might have really made the so much dreaded visit; and Tresham had now to comprehend why she should have done so, since in their various meetings his mistress had never spoken of it. In this view it was only to be accounted for by supposing that she wished, in consequence of their recent conversations, to playfully impose on her lover; and, though Anna's general character weighed against such a case, Tresham allowed himself to believe it might be probable, particularly when he recollected her parting allusion of the morning, which, at the time, gave him great relief.

In the midst of these reveries, Tresham was, contrary to his own calculations, again surprised into a slumber. It was, however, but a light and fitful one, of that kind which, while it crowds one half of our mind with rapid and vague chimeras, leaves the other half, if the terms may be so disposed, confusedly alive to a waking sense of place and surrounding objects. And in this state Tresham's eye, whether his waking or sleeping eye he could not himself determine, fixed on a pale figure that seemed to stand in the space of the open door of the chamber. Starting up, and now in the darkness of the night, which,—only relieved by one struggling ray of the rising moon that obliquely shot across the apartment,—thickly surrounded him—better awake, though not entirely so, Tresham rivetted his eyes on the door-way. The single moonbeam struck through it, and, just as he turned his glance, lightened, he thought, over a flow of white drapery. He shrunk back; recovered himself, and looked again; but all was repose and blankness.

He issued through the door, and quickly descended to the exterior of the college. At an angle of the building that turned towards the park, Tresham again caught the indication of a receding figure; and still he pursued. In the open space of the park nothing appeared, however; and, after some research, he was about to regain his chambers, when, as if it had arisen from the earth, or come down from the heavens, or formed itself out of the column of the air that the previous instant filled its place, Tresham beheld, straight before him, the figure of his mistress. The decayed trunk of an oak partly flung off the moonshine from her white drapery, and for one instant her altered eye communed with his; the next, and while he moved a step to greet her, she turned from him into the dark shrubbery, and became again invisible.

There could now be no further question as to the resemblance—but was it Anna, in reality? Tresham once more, and rapidly, brought to mind her parting jest, and, wildly hoping to be blest with the truth, rushed into the shrubbery, determining also to hasten, if she still evaded him, to her father's house.

The shrubbery had two paths; his mistress did not appear in either, and Tresham hesitated to choose that by which he should seek her. At length he took one at random, which terminated in a small circular space, over which the trees matted, and almost excluded the moonlight. In the centre, on a platform of fresh grass, was a monumental urn, erected to the memory of an esteemed professor of the college; and at the base of the urn he discovered a sitting, drooping figure, that seemed as if it had been designed and executed with the marble, but Tresham knew it was an intrusion there.

Still he approached, and, at about ten yards, recognised Anna. Again she looked on him; but it was a look of vacancy; a blind, stony gaze, as if she had indeed been the inanimate thing he at first supposed her to be.

"Now, certainty or the worst!" cried Tresham, "my beloved! my life's blessing, Anna! speak, if it is you, and if you would not destroy me! speak! sickness and agony are together at my heart—feebleness is in my limbs—fear and horror are in the marrow of my bones!"—he stood within almost touch—tears scalded his cheeks—his knees smote each other,

and his hair stirred, "speak!" he continued, "I implore you in the name of the great God! save your wretched Harry!" He advanced another step with intent to catch her in his arms, but his strength failed him, his eyes swam, a cold perspiration burst through his frame, and he fell, helpless and senseless, at the base of the urn.

CHAPTER IX.

"NEVER, never, while I breathe the breath of this life," said Mrs. Catherine to Larry, in reply to his humble solicitations for pardon, when, in consequence of Tresham's commands, he had arrived at Mr. Ruth's house, with a note of apology.

"Never is a long day, Mrs. Catherine," observed Larry.

"Never—if I died by it," she persisted.

"Then only carry this little bit of a letter from my young masther to your young misthress."

"Letter me no letter—don't dare to open your mouth to me—an' now, what's the raison o' your followin' me?" she continued, as Larry prepared to accompany her out of the hall, down stairs. "Who gave you lave to thrapse through a dacent house in this manner?—Who wanted you?—Who sent for you?—Who are you at all?"

"A friend o' yours to the back bone, Kitty."

"Friend, enah!—go home to Munsther, and tell the likes o' that to your beef-to-the-heel draggle-tails; but we'll larn you manners here."

"Musha, what 'ud you make o' me at all, Catty? sure, this mornin' afore, you riz a scrimmage on me, an' scoulded me till the dogs wouldn't pick my bones; an' throth, you'll soon lave not as much flesh on my bones as 'ud bait a mouse-thrap; consither my case, Kitty."

"What case, you poor omadhaun?"

"You ought sooner for to cheer up my dispondin' hopes, Kitty, nor go on in sich a way, as my masther often says to myself; the poor young masther that has betther speech nor ever myself hard out of the mouth of a livin' sowl; och! if you war to hear him among the mounseers, botherin' them all wid their own words, that he tuck out o' their own chops;

the poor crature, that's now for losin' his speech entirely: for he's going to die, Catty, an' myself 'ill have no new masther, at any rate, whatever we do in other predickyments an' so, he can't creep out to coort your young misthress to-night, Kitty, agra, an' here's his come-off to her—take it, won't you?"

"An' is this all? Take id yourself, you dhaltheen, it's work too good for the likes o' you, sich an ugly man an' a bad Cristhen." Mrs. Catherine turned to go away.

"Catty, chorra-ma-chree you war, don't lave me by mysel in this way; an' a burnin' shame it's for you, Kitty, to be spilin' your own purty face wid mindin' any foolish word might say; the eyes o' you that are like the bluest blue-bell myself ever seen, an' your nose so long and so sthraight, an with your two cheeks like any roses, an' your mouth, as it' in the song, far an' wide, like the fresh strawberries smothered in crame; an' oh, Kitty, when you stand quiet, an' aren't forisin' your hand to a body, what two arms you have, so roun an' so round! not forgettin' your —— do, Catty, honey," continued Larry, interrupting himself in his best suavity of tone "just take id; myself is a shy boy, an' don't care to be goin among the ladies in the night-fall, when one o' them is mayby herself; do, Catherine, an' God bless you; if you plaze Katty, *si vous plait*; there, now, an' glory to you!"

"Bother, Larry," answered Mrs. Catherine, looking full in his face, and then trotting down stairs.

"Musha, the death of a sour crab-apple, souched in a loug o' wather, to you!" ejaculated Larry, alone; "och! there' no bearin' wid your likes, an' all because an honest poor bo wants to keep himself out o' harm's way, an' have nothin' t do wid your pair o' cat's eyes, that are as green as a leek, an the image o' two burnt holes in a blanket, an' your nose a sharp as a hatchet, an' all-a-one-side, like the handle of a can only it's as red as the red-hot iron out o' the forge; an' you chops hangin' down, like a sheep-skin; an' your mouth, tha the sight of id 'ud turn a horse from his oats, or make a do sthrike his father, to say nothin' o' your two arms, that ar just the things for two rowlin'-pins, wid elbows that 'ud pic an eye out of a snail. I must take it up my own self, then prayin' her ladyship mayn't be all alone, for, corp-on-dhoul what 'ud I do if I gave id to that other?" And re-assumin his station in the corner of the hall, Larry debated with him

self, in recollection of the scene of the previous night, the propriety of at once venturing up stairs.

In the drawing-room above, Anna, Maria, and Mortimer, who now had apartments in Ruth's house, together with the old lady and gentleman, sat listening to a musical professor of some local eminence, who, accompanying himself on the now antiquated spinet, entertained them with the good old music of that day. Mr. and Mrs. Ruth had chairs towards the middle of the room; Mortimer stood with Maria over the instrument; and Anna, chafing to her own recollections and feelings, occupied a distant seat by herself. All the lights in the apartment were collected round the performer, so that its remoter parts were in shadow.

Anna had not for some time spoken a word, and it was evident to her anxious sister that Harry Tresham's second disappointment caused her great depression of spirits.

"The night has closed, Mortimer," Maria whispered, "he should have joined us an hour ago; he will not come to-night, and Anna is greatly afflicted."

"He shall come, or he shall stay away for ever; the peace and happiness of a being so amiable, and so dear to us, must not be sacrificed to the whim of a giddy boy," answered Mortimer; "but has she entirely recovered the fright and agitation of last night?" he continued.

"Anna *says* she has, but she does not *look* that she has," resumed the elder sister.

"Why, there can surely be no doubt in the case, after the explanation we all witnessed, Maria; and, pshaw, how puerile in me to talk of it, or allude to it for a moment," said Mortimer.

A pause here occurred in the music, and Anna was heard requesting the performer to sing and play a small piece she had before named to him; the gentleman complied. It was a translation by Tresham from a German poet, and the music, also German, was of a very high character, and calculated to excite in the mind sentiments of a thrilling and supernatural cast. We subjoin the words:—

Shadowy dead! silent dead!
Dwellers in a land unknown!
In awe-tamed hope and holy dread
Your viewless sway we own!
Around, resound

Your voices, though we cannot hear—
Above, below,
Ye come, ye go,
In throngs, though we are blind from fear!

A vision of the church-yard fell
On me, your midnight sentinel.
I looked about me and beneath,
And—while not a wind could breathe—
Whisperings stole through all the ground,
And then an undulation round;
Every particle of earth,
Every rank blade of its birth
Moved and crept—a muttered sound!
A spreading stir! like that which crawls,
In summer, o'er the dank pool's brim,
When the sun's heat fiercely falls,
And insect-hosts are born to him:
I looked, I looked, and glassy eyes
Thickly strewed as stars in skies,
O'er the cleaving surface gleamed;
And in their own weak death-light beamed
Faded cheeks and brows that seemed
Never born, but faintly dreamed!
And then a hurry passed along!
A rush without a sound; a throng
Voiceless, save that for revel-song;
The bloated beetles as they flit
Thro' the thick air, darkening it,
Or on their long legs stalk about,
Drone a drowsy measure out;
Or that the frog hath waked to croak,
Or the distant cock hath spoke;
From stars that fail, a ray ye have,
And glow-worms glinting round each grave;
Silent tumult! dreamy light!
And so ye hurry thro' the night.

The air was yet unfinished when Anna screamed. A low, shuddering scream it was, not vociferous, but as if it came from the heart. She had been sitting with her eyes fixed on the far door-way leading into the inner drawing-room; the door lay open against the jamb, and she could see into the almost dark apartment beyond it. There was a perturbed motion in the gloom as if the almost extinguished light was struggling with the darkness for visibility. Then a form, at first vague and indistinct, then more shapely, then a palpable human shape, was revealed. This glided forward, without a human motion, and Harry Tresham stood looking at her with

melancholy eyes, within the threshold of the room, in the moon's rays that shone through a side window. When the music ceased, as her low wail was heard, the looks of all present were turned towards Anna. The inquirers followed the direction of her intense gaze; but there was nothing to be seen by them to give cause for her distressing lament.

Maria approached her sister to question her, but before she had moved two paces, a loud outcry, that sounded from the upper storey of the old and spacious mansion, was heard, and almost instantly Mrs. Catherine, the housekeeper, broke into the room.

"Ladies, dear! ladies, dear!" she shrieked.

"What is the matter? What has happened?" Maria questioned.

"Oh! genteels, genteels, there is some one in the house that has no call, on the Lord's earth, to be in it, and he's on my foot tracks, so he is."

"Foolish old woman, leave the room," said Captain Mortimer.

"As bould a captain as you are," replied Mrs. Catherine, her natural irritability flashing through her terror, "I tell you that if you saw him as I saw him, sliddering down the stairs, as I saw him, your ham strings would give way, bould as you are. I tell you I saw him with my two living eyes coming—coming—aye, out of Miss Annie's room. Oh, Lord! Lord! here he is in the middle of ye."

Mrs. Catherine covered both her eyes with her hands, and staggered out of the room.

In the height of the prevailing commotion, Mr. Tresham's Larry entered; he gazed round him for a moment with a bewildered look. He thrust a letter into the hand next him, and his departure through the door at which he had entered was instantaneous. Immediately following his exit, the outcry of the housekeeper rose higher and higher without.

The action of Anna meanwhile was pitiable. Continuing her fixed gaze while the housekeeper clamoured, she evinced, by a hissing of the breath, and a cringing of the frame from head to foot, her sense of terror. She did not start or speak; but after a while she slowly and stealthily, as it were, rose from her seat; she grasped the back of her chair for support, and with head and neck protruded, she continued to gaze

forward, her face tintless as the purest marble, and her usually rich red lips bloodless.

Captain Mortimer was the recipient of Henry Tresham's letter from the hands of the mystified Larry. Consulting the superscription, he crossed the room, and presented it. Anna held it in her trembling hand a moment, then she tore the seal open, ran her eye over its contents, and staggering some paces in the direction from which her gaze had been momentarily diverted, she fell, with a heart-broken groan, into her father's arms.

CHAPTER X.

When Dr. Butler, according to his previous intention, called, late at night, to revisit Tresham, the student was not in his chambers. He halloed for Larry, but the attendant did not appear. Then, accompanied by some class-fellows of Tresham, he went into the college grounds, and found the visionary lying senseless before the urn. Blood was all around him; it had flowed from his lungs. This increased symptom of pulmonary disease, Butler had not anticipated, or had expected to counteract, and its appearance, now attributable to Tresham's breach of his command, irritated, whilst it shocked and agitated him.

They conveyed the invalid to his bed, somewhat restored to sensation, but still faint, and apparently stupefied. But Tresham felt no physical pain; at least none equal to his moral agony. His distemper rarely bears the character of acute suffering; nor was he really so incapable of communication as he seemed to be; but for the present, feeling no impulse to yield his griefs with his confidence, he kept his agonizing secret within his own breast, and his eyes on everything and every person around him. This, for a season, was natural: for there are blights of mind, which, in exception to the general rule of imparting, and, by that means, lessening grief, we will not exhibit, which we cannot lay bare to the happy, indifferent eye, as if misery grew avaricious of self-monopoly. An evidence of this may be traced in the dark smile that some-

times breaks around the thin, bloodless lips of disease, repelling, with an unnatural pride and mockery, the whispers of a heart-broken friend, who vainly breathes a hope of health and sunny days to come. So Tresham only uttered some feeble words that supplicated for silence and solitude.

He was therefore left alone on his midnight bed. The moon was rapidly collecting her loose beams from the chamber, like a lady in haste to depart, gathering her thin, white drapery around her. To say that Tresham thought, would be a misuse of words; his brain, as an alarum-bell, rang and thumped out its peal. Philosophy, and the artificial fanaticism it had supplied, were gone, and the foundations of his spirit shook with supernatural horror and natural dismay; he had been taken by surprise, and prostrated.

To meet—almost to touch—a dim, incomprehensible shade, when his living arms sought the embrace of the living form he loved, and the sudden repulsion and curdling of human sympathy that ensued, this wrought a sad change; and then, the still recurring thought of the utter disconnection between him and the blank eye that fell like a vacuum on his, and the whole mystery of which it was a feature! Such recollections tamed him into feebleness, and, like a beaten dog, his soul cringed into itself.

In one instance only, his late speculations remained uppermost; but it was to torture with human agony. He believed his mistress had been called to die! to die! The being who loved him as he loved her! These are simple words, but Tresham felt them strong: the gifted and grateful pupil, the devoted friend, the betrothed wife—she was to die, and he to be left desolate! he wept aloud; and "oh, God!" he cried, "turn that one bitter cup away!" His tears were tears of anguish, but they relieved by exhausting him, and he at last slept.

The early morning saw his attentive and anxious physician by his bedside. Tresham felt better, and wished to rise, but Doctor Butler forbade it, and the student could only pray that a message might be sent by Larry to inquire after Anna's health.

"First, then," said Butler, "your valet is out of the question; after parting from you last night, I met him near the college, as mad a man as any in Christendom; stark mad, under the delusion that a ghost, or something of the kind,

followed at his heels; he foamed at the mouth, and grew absolutely dangerous, so I was obliged to confine him secretly in a strong-barred dark room in my own house, where we shall take care of the creature for you."

Tresham expressed the utmost surprise and sorrow at this intelligence. "You pronounce him, then, in a state of mental derangement, doctor?" he asked, with much anxiety.

"A bonâ-fide lunatic, and as lawful a subject for stripes and a straight waistcoat, as the most outrageous fellow in Bedlam: superstitious fear the provocative of the disease."

"Poor fellow!" resumed Tresham, with some conscientious self-reproach; "you will be gentle with him, doctor, for my sake, and I further request, for particular reasons, that his misfortune may be kept a profound secret."

"I anticipated your wish; no one knows, and no one shall know the wretch's self-induced misery, which, by the way, is only a righteous judgment, after all. And now, about your message to Miss Anna Ruth: I shall—should, rather—bear it myself, if there was any necessity to put you under the compliment; but why ask after her health? The girl is as robust as a mountaineer; I saw her after my first parting from you last night, and thought she never looked better, and chattered, and smiled, and moved so divinely tempting and handsome: only now and then she thought proper to whine about your slight illness, of which, however, I have given her a softened representation."

All but the latter part of this statement was wilful untruth. Anna, far from enjoying good health, lay seriously indisposed in her bed. Nor, although the doctor had really deprived Larry of his liberty, did he believe him to be a madman. Both misrepresentations, however, were the beginning of a system of treatment towards Tresham, which his friendly anxiety, supported by his professional calculations led him to adopt.

He had known Tresham long enough to become fully aware of his mystified habit of mind, and was not without suspicion that the patient's present illness partly arose from its over-indulgence. Late observations further induced him to fear that some mysterious irritation of a particular nature, and connected with Tresham's dreamy studies, and his love for Anna, might be at the bottom of all. Under these views he removed Larry, of whose hag-ridden superstition he was so

well aware, from his master's sight and presence, just as he would have separated the contagious and predisposed members of a family amongst whom a raging fever had gained entrance ; and his false accounts of Anna's health arose from the second apprehension we have pointed out ; although Butler had not yet distinct reason for his caution.

To supply himself with one, it became the doctor's policy and anxiety to win Tresham's confidence, and he engaged in the task with much of that delicate ingenuity which the true gentlemen of his high profession are known to possess : and he succeeded. Apart from Tresham's own esteem for Dr. Butler, he knew him to be the ancient and respected friend of his father, and also the close intimate of the Ruth family ; his warmth of manner, and the almost condescension of his gray hairs in at all courting the attention of a boy, further operated on Tresham's feelings ; so that the poor youth, relaxed from the frenzy of the preceding night, and now tottering under the fardel of his dark secret, willingly cast it down at the feet of his venerable friend, and, with pleading tears, supplicated for advice and assistance.

When he had ended his recital, by a detail of his supposed encounters with the fetch of Anna, Dr. Butler met his very first words with a ready smile, and finally burst into a hearty fit of laughter. He treated the whole matter as a schoolboy's fancy, shaped out of the predisposition or imbecility of the theorist's mind. The other fondly denied the possibility of such mental deception, and, in support of his scepticism, entered into a critical analysis of the nature and power of the mind's agency. But here he met an opponent every way prepared to push on his own purpose. Dr. Butler, without being a German student, had received a good collegiate education, and knew how to wield, as skilfully as any metaphysical adept, the wrangling weapons of sophism ; and, as they were now necessary to his object, he used them artfully and unmercifully. He strengthened himself, too, with illustration drawn, or vouched to be drawn, from his own professional practice : a mode of warfare that is very annoying to a mere theorist, particularly, as in the present case, when adopted by an eloquent old gentleman towards an ingenuous and modest, though enthusiastic youth ; and to all he added the weight of a manner which he knew to be imposing : a polite kind of swagger, and easiness of expostulation, that seemed

manfully assured of success, making itself redoubtable out of the weakness of the opposite case.

"I over and over again assert that there is no such ghost or fetch-bringer as a diseased imagination. The whole world knows it, and every day's experience proves it. Nay, apparition-seekers, and seers, too, are part of our property in fund; 'tis a common disease; as common as any other; well known to the faculty, and very money-making into the bargain: thousands have seen more frightful things than this veritable fetch you speak of; and, for a little hard cash, some poor village apothecary, day after day, lays the hobgoblin in the Red Sea.

"What do you say of hypochondriac delusions, sir? what can you pretend to aver? all the varieties of this complaint—this positive physical complaint—flow from a debilitated imagination. And yet, how really does the patient feel! how self-clear are his apprehensions! how obstinate his prepossessions! The common and most laughable whim of a man believing his posteriors to be a glass window, on which he dares not sit, lest he should break it, is known to you; I had, myself, a patient with this fancy, whom, after losing all Christian patience with, I manufactured into more solidity in his own opinion, by assaulting him, till I was weary, in the humbug part. Where was that creature's mind, or his noble reasoning powers? Where were his eyes? Why cannot these miserable people see before them? Another demoniac came to me, with an imaginary lock-jaw, and this person I caused to open his mouth, in order to afford vent to a volume of screaming, brought on by a smart application of my knuckles to his lower maxillary. A third, who swore he was the man that 'was hanged last Wednesday'—(an infamous murderer)—I restored to his good opinion, by taking it for granted that he gave a true account of himself, and half strangling him accordingly. I refer you to authentic records,—you shall see and read the books, which establish the facts of men having been haunted, to their own belief, by the ghosts of Alexander the Great, of Potiphar's wife, of Samson, and Saint Bridget. What do you say to that?—Nay, here is as positive evidence that people have imagined themselves followed by a repetition *of* themselves—a regular fac-simile, or double,—in a word, a downright fetch, more attentive than yours, Tresham. In my own practice, I met a case exactly similar; not to talk

of a respectable person, who assured me he was a triangle; or of another, who declared his head to be the hypothenuse; or of a third,—a musical professor,—who upheld it was a basoon."

"But, my good doctor, all these are cases of insanity, and unless you believe me as mad as poor Larry, or wish me to believe so, I cannot exactly see how——"

"My good God!" interrupted Butler, "who gave you leave to think a hypochondriac person a mad person? who told you so? No, sir; there is a wide distinction; there is every distinction; madness is total derangement of mind, unfitting a man for any occupation of life; the other is a partial infatuation, that does not incapacitate the patient from making clear perceptions in any other case, and generally demeaning himself as a sane man. Don't interrupt me again, now, by asking me, do I think you to be hypochondriac; to save your apprehensions and self-contempt, I make no such allusion, but the better way for you to consider this subject is to put yourself, for the present, out of the question, and weigh, as a rational person, the undeniable truths I submit to you.

"Assuredly, there are other modes by which the imagination becomes diseased than by the physical action upon it of what we call the hypochondriac region of the viscera. From continued irritation of itself it can first disarrange, and then impose upon itself; and then a long-indulged apprehension terminates in visual phantasy, after having first worn down the mind to consent, without consciousness, to the delusion. I do not pretend, just now, to determine the exact way in which you have been imposed upon; I have said, I think, you are not hypochondriac; and, most probably, you are not; the state to which, by very nonsensical speculations, you may have reduced your nerves, however, is another question; and, good gods! what *monstrum horrendum* is not born of nerves! spectres and visitations beyond the wonders of the hypochondriac, or the magic lantern itself; chimeras dire; airy tongues that syllable men's names; *disjecta membra*, in fact, out of the span of any quotation.

"But leaving the future to develop the particular source of your weakness, let me state a case rather in point with yours. In the course of my early practice, in another place, I had a young friend, a brother-brush too, who was attached to a very enchanting young lady. He was a man of regular

education, of sound intellect, and well-balanced feelings. His mistress became ill, and he attended her. One day, that he engaged to dine with me, she became much worse, and when he called at my house, fatigued and worn out with watching and anxiety, my friend entertained little hope of her life. Before dinner I pressed him to a glass of wine, as he seemed to require some such stimulus; he took the glass in his fingers, and was raising it to his lips, when, to my utter astonishment, he started back on his chair, fixed his eyes on vacancy, and grew deadly pale. I spoke to him, and, after the fit passed away, ascertained that, just as he was about to taste the wine, the figure of his mistress entered the apartment."

"Heavens, sir!" Tresham cried, in painful attention to the sequel.

"Almost at the same time a rap came to the door with a message that the lady was dead."

"There, sir—whatever argument you may be inclined to build on your own story—there is a coincidence too strong for any subtilty, or any impression you may kindly wish to make on me!" resumed Tresham.

"The very vehemence of imagination," Butler continued, "which in the instance of your fetch, precipitated you upon the most rash as well as boyish conclusion, still urges you to an unwarranted anticipation of my anecdote. Pray, let me go on. We, together, followed the messenger to the young lady's house, and found her—not dead—but in a state of suspended existence, from which our efforts soon called her back, and she is at present living, the wife of that fetch-seer, and the mother of some dozen of his children. Now, say anything you like."

"It is all very extraordinary, Mr. Butler—all—the conclusion as much, if not more so, than the commencement. I have nothing to say; I implicitly believe you, and I can say nothing; only I beg to ask you how you account for the prepossession of your friend?"

"That he did not see the young lady's ghost, or, according to the trashy superstition, her fetch, is pretty evident; inasmuch as, in the first case, there was no ghost of hers then to be seen; and, in the second, there could have been no true fetch either, the lady being yet well to look at, in this world. He was imposed upon, then, purely by his imagina-

tion, exhausted and diseased by wretched spirits and a lover's anxiety; or else by a physical deception of the eye. That the first is an accident of every day's occurrence I have already shown, and you can no longer doubt; that the other, though less frequent, is also naturally incidental, I can prove by another anecdote for which I am, myself, authority.

"Although a practising physician, much of my youthful study was devoted to anatomical pursuits, and, in a large private apartment, I constantly had a subject for my purposes. On a particular evening I contrived to place upon his legs a fellow of good form, in order to remark the arrangement of the outward muscles, previous to taking any further liberties with him. While thus engaged, my eye wandered to the other end of the room, and was there startled with a repetition of my subject, standing bolt upright, exactly as I had contrived his counterpart. You may be sure I at once thought that this was the spiritual double, come to remonstrate against the indignity inflicted on his mortal brother; but I advanced to the intruder, notwithstanding. After a few steps forward, he was not to be seen. I returned close to my subject, from which I had before stood apart, and, again looking to the opposite end of the place, saw not the first apparition, but what do you think, instead? My own self. Ay, you may stare at me, but I tell the blessed truth. There I was."

"Well, sir?" Tresham raised himself on his elbow, in bed.

"Well, sir. If I was not afraid of the ghost of a man towards whom I entertained some carving propensities, you need not suppose I grew shy of a second self, so I walked up to *him*, with all the curiosity of one Dromio, while taking a first survey of the other, both meeting, for the first time, in mature manhood. But, like the subject-spectre, this also disappeared as I approached. Coming back to my point of sight it reappeared; when I again changed places it again vanished; and, in fact, the whole phenomenon was at last explained to me, by observing that the quick vapours of the room, acted upon by refraction of the rays of light, assumed the nature of a mirror, and then, as I stood at different points, in both instances, reflected first my subject, and next myself."

At the conclusion of this discourse, Tresham grew silent and thoughtful, and Butler saw that he evidently began to mistrust himself. Inwardly laughing at some of the arguments

and illustrations that had wrought the student's scepticism, the good doctor then shook hands with him, bid him a hasty farewell, and bent his steps to his other patient at Mr. Ruth's house, of whom, from her random expressions the night before, Butler suspected an infatuation similar to that which tormented her lover; and, first, to assure himself on this point was now his greatest anxiety.

CHAPTER XI.

About three weeks after the day that included the time of the last chapter, Mrs. Catherine sat, at midnight, in her snug apartment alone, bewailing, as usual, her forlorn state.

"A weary, weary lot," she said, in soliloquy, sipping at the same time a rich cordial, before a good blazing fire. "A lone crature like me, up an' down, over-an'-hether, day afther day, night afther night; no rest, no pace, no comfort, none," and she sipped again; "an' in an ould haunted house an' family where a body doesn't know a spirit from a Christhen sowl; but what drives 'em into my head at sich an hour? The Lord presarve us! I'll think o' my prayers," another sip, "stop—whisht! Is that my lady's bell goin' to ring? Musha, no; God send she won't want me again this blessed an' holy Saturday night, that I may lie down an' have an hour's right sleep at last. Bless us, how she raves like anything, as if she saw him every minute at the bedside. An' poor Larry, afther all!—myself wonders what's cum of him, an' if all they say is the thruth;"—she was about to taste once more, when, starting suddenly, she laid down the glass—"Arrah, what's that, at all? As I'm a sinner born, somethin' or another at the windee! I daarn't screech out! that 'ud frighten poor Miss Anny; its there agin—musha, I'll faint!"

A low heart broken voice named Mrs. Catherine's name at the window, and, in all manner of sweet words, admonished her to advance.

"It just wants to flatther me into the clutches iv id!—I'll not peg an inch!" she resolved.

"Catty, a-vourneen; Kitty, a-chorra-ma-chree, sure we

knows you're there ; I sees the light through the chinks o' the shetter ; I hard you stirrin', and your own darlin' voice speakin' ; cum to us," continued the voice.

"If you're nothin' bad, ax me in God's name!" at last answered Mrs. Catherine.

"For God's sake, then, let us in."

"What are you at-all at-all?" asked the housekeeper, cautiously approaching.

"A lost crature," answered the voice.

"No sperit, or a thing that a-way?"

"Flesh an' blood, Kitty, only very little iv either ; but plenty o' the bones, howsomdever, Catherine."

"*Who* are you?"

"Larry, avoch."

"Larry! bud are you dead or alive, Larry? They say you made away wid yourself."

"Larry alive, Catherine, jewel ; an' its rainin' on us."

"Can you make me sure o' that?"

"Avoch, open the windee, an' we'll thry."

"It 'ud be a baste that refused you, then :" and the forgiving and humane housekeeper half advanced, "but myself is afeard o' you yet, Larry," she added, stopping and hesitating.

"Musha, what 'ud you fear iv a dyin' man, Catty, though his ghost might be another thing?" he expostulated ; "Wurra! wurra! open the windee, if there's a Christhen heart in your body ; it's rainin', I tell you, an' as pitch-dark as a black hole ; an' as I crossed the bridge, it was blowin' too, sthrong enough to whip the horns iv a cow's head."

This appeal was decisive ; Mrs. Catherine unbarred the window-shutter, and threw up the sash, but ran back in terror the moment after ; for there, instead of the round, purple-faced Larry she had before known, appeared a woeful caricature of the original caricature itself, with the cheeks livid, hollow, and hanging down over the jaws in little bags of skin ; the eyes, hitherto half hidden in flesh, staring, for the first time, wide open, and unprotected from their sockets ; the pot paunch totally waned away ; and, added to this, the apparition wore no coat or hat ; but, in place of the latter, the fragment of an old red night-cap fluttering round its brows.

"Oh, mother o' saints!—it's the laste bit like you, Larry, agra," resumed Mrs. Catherine, "bud only as like as that other

was like your unloocky masther ; och, Larry a-lanna-machree ! for the love o' marcy dale honest wid me, an' say at once if it's yourself or no, gi' me a sign !"

" Gi' *me* a dhrop o' that good liquor," said Larry, pointing from the window to the table, " if I'm to gi' you anything; just a taste, Kitty, or myself 'ill never have the strength to creep in."

" Musha, here, then, Larry ; an' it's now we may see you're yourself, or the remains, at laste ; in regard that sperits knows nothin' o' the likes o' this ;" and she poured out a bumper, which Larry swallowed, while yet standing at the window. Then he put himself in motion to enter ; and, assisted by Mrs. Catherine, who placed a table under the window, for his foot, Larry at last made a lodgment, with many groans and strange cries, before the fire. The window was again closed and cautiously barred, and the quondam friends resumed their discourse, face to face.

" A dyin' man's blessin', as I said afore, come down on you, Kitty."

" Dyin' ! arrah, why so, Larry ?"

" Gi' me a morsel to brake my fast for the love of all the saints in heaven, Catherine."

" Musha, my poor fellow, lashins and lavins ;"* and she rose to provide refreshments : " bud you're so hungry, are you, Larry, a-cushla ?"—Mrs. Catherine went on as she hurried herself about.

" I'm fastin' more nor three days," said Larry, deliberately lying, though, indeed, he was half starved.

" Och, mille murthers ! how did that come about ?—there, there :" she spread abundance of good cheer before him, and Larry encountered it with the grave despatch and silence of a cormorant : plate after plate disappeared, and Mrs. Catherine had more than once to revisit the larder. During the process, she contrived, however, to persevere in her questions for drawing Larry out.

" What in the world cum across you, Larry ? I knew you warn't wid your masther sense that sorrowful night ; an', as I tould you, Larry, there was sich ugly stories about you."

" Wait a bit, Kitty," Larry half articulated, his mouth being full.

* Plenty and some to spare.

"One said you turned your own hangman."

"Wait a bit," he repeated.

"Another, that you jumped into the river; an' they said, when you were dragged out afther three days' soakin', an' laid on a bed, that your poor panch, that was, God bless us! touched the loft, an' the parish couldn't make aff a coffin big enough to put you in."

"Just wait a bit, honey."

"Another said that you cut your own pipe wid your own two hands. Musha, Larry, that was the worst story of all; could you ever think of such a wicked thing?"

Larry at length concluded his collation, and then, in a relapse of groans and lamentations, repeated a long-winded grace, of which the conclusion was—"an' keep us in our thrue mind, an' deliver us from the power o' the divil, an' give us patience an' resignation, for ever-an'-ever, amin;" to which he added a still more lengthened draught of ale, and finally sunk back, helpless and querulous, in Mrs. Catherine's good arm-chair.

"An' how is id all wid you now, Larry?" asked his entertainer, from the other side of the fire.

"In regard o' the aitin' an' drinkin' an' o' your friendship, Catherine, a little betther, we thank God an' you for id; you were always a soft sowl, Catherine, though I say id; but my thrials are great, Kitty; I'll never be much the betther o' them, the longest day I live."

"Time cures all, Larry; time an' a friendly hand to rub down the fur with the grain."

"Oh, Catherine!" he cried, his eyes squeezing out some tears as he fixed them on the blazing fire; he paused, squeezed again, shaking his head bitterly during the effort, and there he stopped.

"Larry, Larry, take heart, good boy, or the grief of id 'ill be the death o' you," said Mrs. Catherine, also squeezing her eyes for some tears, while her sympathising voice was as miserable as she could intone it.

"Oh, Kitty," Larry repeated, and paused again.

"And oh, Larry, a-vourneen," Mrs. Catherine answered, rocking herself backward and forward as she stooped with her elbows on her knees; and so they went on till the tears came at last, and they wept galore, to their full satisfaction, and as two tender hearts ought to weep.

"Musha, bud what's the matther at all, Larry?" said the housekeeper in the midst of her speculative sorrow; "what came o' you? I only seen you run out o' the house, while the fright was crimpling my heart to the size of a bee's knee."

"Sure enough, Catty, I ran; I ran till I fell, an' then I gets up an' sees him—you may guess who—behind me."

"Oh-a! oh-a!" cried Mrs. Catherine, resuming her lamentations; "an' then, Larry?"

"An' then, Kitty, it's all thrue enough that I put the rope round my neck."

Mrs. Catherine started up with a scream; and "It is your sperit, then?" she asked.

"Wait a bit, Catherine; they cut me down over soon; an' then it's just as thrue I went to the river."

"But didn't drownd yourself?" the housekeeper said, as Larry stopped, his eyes still fixed on the fire.

"Bud a surly dog of a sodger levels his piece at me, an'—I knows what you'd be at, says he, bud by Ja—s if you drownd yourself on my post, I'll have your life, so I will."

"An' that sent you away, by coorse, Larry?"

"Id sent me here to yourself, Catherine."

"Avoch, my poor boy, sure 'twas an angel sent you."

"A hungry angel, Catherine; an' if it was the will o' God that it war an angel in earnest, sure it was another angel that met me when yourself came across me, an' gave me pace an' comfort, an' plenty to ate, an' enough to dhrink, an' a good fire fornent me;" and here Larry roused himself, stretched out the palms of his hands to the heat, while his head was turned round addressing his benefactress; "an' yourself is the sort of an angel I'd like to meet when I'd be cowld or hungry, wet or dhry," he continued, rubbing all over, with his now heated palms, his face and behind his ears.

"Bud, Catherine, tell me one thing; how is my ma——you know who I mane?"

"Given over ever sense; an' my young misthress as bad; it's a great favour come on the brain, the doctor says."

"The doctor, Kitty!—is he in the house now?—bad loock to every bone in his skin!"—asked Larry, in some alarm and bitterness. In fact, from the different accounts given by Dr. Butler, and now by himself, of Larry's disposal of his time since the memorable evening to which he made allusion, it will be perceived that one or other departed from the facts,

and we can no longer conceal that the valet was the embellisher. The doctor stated truly to Tresham the immediate cause of his servant's absence, and Larry had remained a prisoner in Dr. Butler's house within a few minutes before his visit at Mrs. Catherine's window, when, taking advantage of the intentional negligence of his keeper, he had effected his escape in the shorn plight we have endeavoured to describe; but shrewdly guessing, from the housekeeper's questions, that the true reasons of his disappearance were not known, and thinking any account less humiliating than the real one, Larry did not hesitate to humour the very stories with which she supplied him, and for which their words are our sole authority.

Learning from Mrs. Catherine that Dr. Butler was not in the house, he regained his self-possession, and returned to the topic of his master's illness.

"Given over, you tell me, Kitty? Duv you think it's himself, Kitty, or that black deception that brought grief an' throuble on us all?"

"Himself, by coorse, Larry, in regard of his going to lave us; for sperits never dies, you know, case why, they were never born of woman."

"You spake raison, Kitty; an' his real self was ever an' always tinder-hearted, Kitty, only a little cranky betimes, maybe; but no matther for that, in regard I'm not far frum the likes myself; if I was sure entirely, I'd not think much o' going to see him dead, dacently."

"That's tinder-hearted in yourself, Larry, honey."

"Bud I'd go in the noon day, Kitty; wouldn't that be the counsel you'd gi' me?"

"Sure enough, Larry; an' faith it 'ill soon be time, for there's the daylight comin' in through the windee-shutter; an' whisht!—may I never die in sin bud I hear my lady's bell; no—wait—no—it's the captain's; musha, myself wondhers what makes him get up so mortial early; I must be stirrin' from you, Larry, agra: an' for fear Miss Maria, or the ould misthress, or any o' the maids 'ud come down on you, just step into this room—don't be shy, Larry—an' when it's your time, we'll get you out to your masther, unknownst to anybody."

Larry slowly complied, and as the housekeeper locked the door upon him, she could not help asking herself—"an' is this all he has to say to me, the cowld-hearted, ingrateful

thief?" She paused a little with her hand on the key, hoping to hear Larry's voice—"Did you call me, Larry, a-vourneen?" an explosive snore seemed to answer in the negative, and "oh, just listen to him nosing it," resumed Mrs. Catherine, turning to attend Captain Mortimer's bell; "yet the poor sowl is so tired, an' worn down, an' in the lowness o' sperits wid his sufferins," she added, somewhat forgivingly, "an' we'll wait wid patience till he comes back to his flesh agin."

Mortimer rang, for the purpose of sending the housekeeper into Anna's chamber, to inquire from Maria into the state of the invalid's health, as very early upon this morning Doctor Butler had led him to expect a favourable change. After receiving his message, and departing to communicate it, Mrs. Catherine returned with the happy intelligence that, as far as Maria could judge, all feverish symptoms had apparently abated, and that poor Anna now lay tranquil, though, Mrs. Catherine added, not yet in her right mind. This was gratifying to Mortimer, notwithstanding the clause added by the housekeeper, and he dismissed her with a notification that Doctor Butler had engaged to take an early breakfast with him in his own apartment.

It will at once be surmised why, independently of Mortimer's natural anxiety for the health of his mistress's sister, the information gratified him. Although of a strong mind, and taught, from his childhood, to laugh at anything like supernatural agency, Anna's point-blank assertion of the fetch visit, twice repeated, he compelled himself, over and over, to consider the vision merely as a creation of her excited fancy and irritated mood; but reason failed to convince him quite, and, in spite of himself, the contrary conviction remained; and now, too, the occurrence he had previously related to Maria found ready entrance into his reflections, and claimed a notice he had before successfully refused to extend to it.

Still, however, he was most anxious to believe that Tresham's appearance in the drawing-room to Anna was a real appearance; although he had never been able to propose to Doctor Butler, or to any other person, a question that might better lead to the truth, by acquainting him whether or not the student was, on that evening, absent from his college chambers. Tresham's illness, the very next morning,

put it out of Mortimer's power to ask himself; nor is it likely that, with full opportunity to do so, he should have hazarded an inquiry that, under the circumstances, might prove too delicate and dangerous to Tresham, and even too distressing to Mortimer, in the possible result.

Dr. Butler seemed to be the only individual to whom he might unbosom himself; and Mortimer often felt disposed to the confidence, but was checked by other considerations. Much of this gentleman's honest zeal depended, it was evident, on his incredulity towards such stories as Mortimer must impart, so that he could only expect to get laughed at, or, if he succeeded in making an impression, the doctor's professional energy would be distracted, and neither of these results was desirable. Mortimer, therefore, remained in doubt; one question, however, he resolved at last to ask of Dr. Butler in the course of the morning.

He rose to prepare for receiving his old friend at an early breakfast; and, before the hour had struck, Butler's voice was heard in the outward apartment. When the gentlemen met, Mortimer found that his guest had already been to Anna's bedside, and was now in good spirits at her promising symptoms.

"All danger is past;" he continued, "and the only thing we have yet to regret, and, I believe, must for some time regret, is her continued wandering of brain."

"Mrs. Catherine's surmise was true, then." Mortimer asked what was the doctor's opinion of Tresham.

"Candidly, I grow alarmed about him. But thereby hangs a tale I shall at length relate, for your wonder or amusement. I did not care to talk of it, at first, as circumstances would have made it awkward; that is, while your lady's sister was in danger, I saw no time for it; but, now that her recovery is certain, we may enjoy a laugh at the conceit. You remember my vexation and mirth at ascertaining from you and Maria the immediate cause of Anna's illness; well, what will you say when I inform you that her lover's fit—I mean his increased attack—comes from a source similar to Anna's strange infatuation?"

"I scarcely understand you," said Mortimer, raising his eyes in some alarm.

"Then hear me out: On the night when he became so

seriously bad, I had left him, at an early hour, in his chambers, with my imperative commands to retire betimes to rest."

"And that was the same night that Anna's prepossession caused her sudden fit, also?"

"The very same," answered Butler.

"Did he afterwards leave his chambers?" asked Mortimer, thus getting in his long-contemplated question.

"I'll tell you. My mind misgave me, and so late as twelve o'clock I called back——"

"But pray, doctor, when did you part from him on that evening?" interrupted Mortimer.

"I said early, did I not?—About seven or eight o'clock, I think."

Mortimer felt relieved by this explanation; Tresham, then, by his absence after seven or eight o'clock, from his chambers, had time to practise the deception Mortimer suspected him of.

"He was not in the college," continued Butler; "I turned into the grounds, and found him stretched on the damp grass in the shrubbery. When removed to his bed, I forbore, for that night, to reproach him with the breach of arrangement between us; next morning, however, I rated him soundly, and can you guess his justification?"

"No—not even remotely," answered Mortimer, while, in fact, he only denied his own thought.

"It was—that the fetch—as they call it—of his mistress had seduced him from his chambers."

"Heavens!—did he talk rationally, consistently?"

"About as much so as one could hope from a man not absolutely mad, yet bewitched to extremity. But how is this, gallant captain? Are your nerves, too, that a twenty-pounder could not flutter, subdued by a nursery tale?"

"Pshaw, no, good doctor; I only wonder—ha! ha! I only am surprised at the boy's weakness—of course, you met his statement properly?"

"I flatter myself I did, captain."

"But you argued with him?"

"Why, aye, in our own overpowering professional way."

"And with what effect?"

"A preparatory one, during the first discussion; and I have since returned again and again to the attack, and at last fully

convinced him, that, in common with thousands before him, he has been an egregious ass. But we shall speak of Tresham by and bye. At present I wish to inform you of some of my views for Anna."

"I shall hear them with the greatest pleasure and interest."

"Particularly as you must assist me in them."

"Command me."

"In a word, then, we have both to swear some white lies; nothing better is left us for the perfect re-establishment of her mind and health."

"Oh, tempt me to what you will."

"Taking it for granted that the poor girl imposes on her own understanding, but still recollecting that we cannot convince her she does so, I strongly fear that, if the chimera be not effectually banished from her thoughts, Anna may not speedily recover a sound mind. But why should we not rout it out at once?—Why not admit these very visitations she raves about, yet stoutly assert them to have been real visits? Will you uphold me?"

"By all means; I approve the finesse; but must not Tresham be made a party?"

"Certainly not. To make him one would be to let him know of Anna's sympathetic folly, and that were the devil with Tresham himself; fire to tow, or a spark to a gunpowder magazine."

"Then how do you propose to act? When the lovers meet, they will naturally understand each other."

"They shall not meet—shall not chatter together—shall not even see each other, till they are both perfectly re-established in health and common sense—if such is to be the case—and their minds entirely new-modelled and sufficiently strong to laugh at the knowledge, seasonably obtained, of their mutual delusion. But more of this anon. Now let us go, hand in hand, to Anna's chamber, and your business is to vouch for the truth of whatever romance you hear me originate."

CHAPTER XII.

BEFORE the entrance of the gentlemen, Anna awoke from an intense slumber, to the first consciousness of her situation that, for weeks, had blessed her mind. She found a hand holding hers, a gentle, tender hand; and it was like the fading of a dream that, a moment before, a soft kiss and breathing had visited her brow, and a warm tear fallen upon her eye-lids. She slowly raised her eyes and recognized her sister. There, indeed, that devoted sister had sat, almost without intermission, since the first hour of her illness. It has been often remarked, that in sickness there is no hand like a woman's hand, no heart like a woman's heart; and there is not. A man's breast may swell with unutterable sorrow, and apprehension may rend his mind; yet place him by the sick couch, and in the shadow, rather than the light, of the sad lamp that lights it; let him have to count over the long, dull hours of night, and wait, alone and sleepless, the struggle of the grey dawn into the chamber of suffering; let him be appointed to this ministry even for the sake of the brother of his heart, or the father of his being, and his grosser nature, even where it is more perfect, will tire; his eye will close, and his spirit grow impatient of the dreary task; and, though love and anxiety remain undiminished, his mind will own to itself a creeping-in of irresistible selfishness, which indeed he may be ashamed of, and struggle to reject, but which, despite all his efforts, remains to characterize his nature, and prove, in one instance at least, his manly weakness.

But see a mother, a sister, or a wife, in his place. The woman feels no weariness, and owns no recollection of self. In silence, and in the depth of night, she dwells not only passively, but so far as the qualified term may express our meaning, joyously. Her ear acquires a blind man's instinct, as from time to time it catches the slightest stir, or whisper, or breath of the now more than ever loved one, who lies under the hand of human affliction. Her step, as in obedience to an impulse or a signal she moves about, would not waken a mouse; if she speaks, her accents are a soft echo of

natural harmony, most delicious to the sick man's ear, conveying all that sound can convey of pity, comfort, and devotion; and thus, night after night, she tends him like a creature sent from a higher world, when all earthly watchfulness has failed, *her* eye never winking, *her* mind never palled, *her* nature, that at all other times is weakness, now gaining a superhuman strength and magnanimity, herself forgotten, and her sex alone predominant.

"Is it you, my dearest sister?" said Anna, when she saw who held her hand.

"Oh, my beloved Anna! will you not know me? Can you forget your Maria?"

"Forget you?—no, no, no—but one cannot now be so sure of a face one ought to know well; how is Tresham, Maria?"

"Do not speak so much, Anna, we are desired to request you will not; but Tresham is very well; very well, my dear sister."

"I dreamt he was not well," resumed the invalid, "and oh, sister, I dreamt such other things! How long have I been thus? how long a-bed and forgetful?"

"Hush, Anna—hush, my love; only some days."

"Maria," Anna, after a pause, went on, and now rapidly speaking in a whisper, "Maria—I—I die to see him: one look—one sight of him as he used to be! but, harkye, sister, let him come at noon, or in the middle of the day, or very early in the morning—that will be the best time; what time is it now? after the nightfall?"

"No, my dear Anna; it is not yet ten o'clock in the forenoon, only the blinds are all down, and the room darkened, that you may be quiet, and get some rest and refreshing sleep."

"Hist! hist! I hear a low step; whose is it?" said Anna, alarmed.

Maria rose and opened the door for Butler and Mortimer.

"If it was himself, Maria, he would smile on me," continued Anna, relapsing, as Butler approached, into her confusion of persons, and mixing this up with her broken recollections of the past; while her eye vacantly fixed on his, and she crushed herself against the opposite side of the bed, grasping the covering with spasmed hands, and her white lips moving

without sound, till at last, as Butler came nearer, she continued aloud :—

"I know you ; but you are not he, though so like him—he is not so silent and wretched—go, in God's name !—Maria ! where are you ?—put your arms around me—hold me—go, go—I saw you before, and I know you now—go, go !"

"What, my sweet patient ! how have I offended ?" said Butler, in an easy tone. Mortimer, who stood behind him, was more shocked at such an unusual scene, and whispered—

"Let us withdraw, and chose a better time."

"No, no—permit me ; stay where you are," answered Butler ; "seem to understand what I shall say aloud to you. So ; fair weather to our friend Tresham, captain."

The words instantly seemed to restore Anna to a perfect knowledge of those around her ; she started, and whispered in Maria's ear—"Listen !"

"Is it not to Italy he travels ?" said Mortimer, endeavouring thus to follow Butler's cue.

"Italy. I have a love message from him to somebody ; can it be told now, Maria ?" asked Butler, still with seeming carelessness.

"Yes, sir—now—this moment—for God's sake ! To Italy, you tell me !" said Anna, before her sister could answer.

"Verily, and indeed," resumed Butler, : "his father arrived unexpectedly among us, giving him but an hour's preparation ; yet, even in that time, the goose wished to write a sighing, sonnetteering farewell to a certain person——"

"And he did not ?" interrupted Anna.

"*I* could not, and would not permit him, as I feared something too ardent and startling for the nerves of a fair invalid we are all bound to care for." Butler looked towards Mortimer, as if to claim his support.

"So, he was obliged to content himself with making us his apologists," said Mortimer, taking the hint.

"And how long is this ago ?" asked Anna.

"Two days, exactly."

"He will soon have performed his journey, and in about a fortnight you may expect to hear from him, my dear sister," continued Mortimer.

"Yes—and, in a few weeks after, see him, and then, if you like, keep him entirely to yourself, my sweet patient," Butler

went on. "By the way, Mortimer, you remember something, do you? I forget what—a trifle—some folly or other, however—that he requested us to mention?"

"Oh, yes—he charged us to bear to Anna his profound regrets and apology for having—upon the occasion of his late visits——"

"Ay; pshaw! that was it," said Butler.

"Assumed a ridiculous mystery of manner," continued Mortimer; "that—that——"

Anna, raising herself in the bed, broke in with—"Does he mean two visits—one before, and the other after, our last morning walk, by the Lacken?"

"To be sure he does; but I see you remember this child's play better than it deserves," said Butler.

She sank back, exhausted, but more calm; then, in a moment, resumed:—

"What could have been his shocking motive? To kill me, or drive me mad, I am sure, sir."

"Poh—to ascertain, in his wisdom, whether a foolish girl could be well frightened or no; you must not expect downright wisdom in everything a boy does, even though that boy be clever, handsome, and a constant admirer into the bargain;" and Butler sat, and kindly took her hand.

"He is very penitent," said Mortimer; "contrite to the dust, and really miserable, lest you should not forgive him, dear Anna."

"Oh, we cannot long be very angry with poor Tresham, you know." He rose and whispered to Maria—"Now let her have her own undisturbed reflections for half an hour, or about:" then concluded aloud—"so, good day, my good, thriving patient, and thank the obliging stars that ordered away your lover just at the time you resolved upon looking so frightful;" and the two gentlemen left the chamber.

"This seems to do well, doctor, if you can brave it out—but what with Tresham?" asked Mortimer when they were alone.

"Get him out of Kilkenny as fast as we can; his very health requires it, even, if appearances were not, in this case, to be saved."

"But in any case you cannot present him with the true reasons for such a step?"

"No; as either would *unnecessarily* shock him. Mark my

emphasis—I must try different measures. He must believe that Anna is wroth against him, and, for a time, will not see him."

"Surely that will be as severe a shock as any?"

"Severe as I can contrive it, but antagonist to the other, or to any he has yet received; and there is my hope."

"I do not understand you; pray explain."

"It is my opinion that a mystified and wretched state of mind, acting on the nerves, and through them on the whole system, has strongly tended to lay one basis for Tresham's present illness; and, without wholly trusting to the arguments we have used together, I would try to shake that basis by another good agitation. His love and vanity shall take up arms against the German fathers. And, on the same principle that one poison is coursed out of the frame by another and stronger, I think I shall thus administer, to the progress of Tresham's disease, counteracting medicine."

"But are there not alarming physical symptoms?"

"Alarming, I admit, as I have already admitted; ay, very dangerous; yet not irremovable. A new mental action, and then, peace, bodily repose, and proper treatment, and pure air, may yet establish him. Come, let us see Tresham together. But, stop a moment; one word, first, with Mr. Ruth."

They spoke with the old gentleman, and after assuring him of the convalescence of his child, Butler went on to say that, however excellent Tresham, in many respects, might be, he was yet the slave of a gloomy mind, that, in the doctor's opinion, had caused the present indisposition of Anna; and Dr. Butler seriously added, he could undertake to attend the invalid only on the condition that Mr. Ruth discountenanced, for a given time, the student's visits to his house.

Parental solicitude yielded a ready assent to these terms, which Butler got the father to embody, in the shape of a letter to Tresham. He then informed him of the finesse practised on Anna by the report of her lover's journey to Italy, and engaged Mr. Ruth to countenance it, and take such precautions as should exclude from her ear all contrary information. These arrangements made, the doctor and his friend hastened to Tresham's chambers.

A favourable turn had, over night, taken place in Tresham's disorder. He slept sounder than usual, and awoke and arose

in a flow of spirits that surprised even himself. This moment of new enjoyment received some shock, however, in the abrupt appearance of Larry at his chamber door, the poor fellow habited as he had presented himself at Mrs. Catherine's window, and still exhibiting all the poetical character of his own ghost. After recovering his first surprise, Tresham recollected he should have been prepared for this vision, as Doctor Butler had, the day before, advised him of the re-establishment of Larry's sanity; and mentioned the likelihood of his speedy enfranchisement. So, after a cordial salutation and welcome, which Larry heard in silence, the student forbore in pity and delicacy all allusion to the past, and only informed him where he would find a befitting suit of clothes, and the necessaries for refreshment.

A gloom, however, suddenly fell on Tresham, induced by this reappearance of his servant, which called up the dark, and not yet banished recollections of the first mysterious scene they had witnessed together; and Tresham, irresistibly yielding to the influence of the mood, cast himself on the sofa.

Larry, on his part, also felt many of his old alarms returning. Catherine's portrait of the bad health of his master had led him to expect the apparition of a man lying in his bed, and reduced almost to the last gasp; and when instead he beheld Tresham not very much altered since their last interview, he could not help casting an eye towards the bed, in expectation of beholding there the true and real master he had come "to see dead, dacently."

In these doubts Larry brought to mind a resolution he had, previously to his late misfortune, formed in order to quiet his own notions of identity; and so, cautiously taking his stand at the back of the sofa—

"Are you asleep or awake, sir?" he asked.

"I shall never sleep!" answered Tresham.

"Musha, that 'ud be very unnatural, Masther Harry."

"Then be it so. What have I to do with anything natural?"

"Bad words, unless he raves," thought the valet. "Providence is over all, sir."

"Perhaps."

"Equivocation"—again ruminated Larry; then aloud—"I didn't say my prayers last night, masther."

"And what then?"

"Nothin' at all; only I was for axing your lave to say 'em

now, above my breath, after a manner, an' maybe you'd put in a word wid me, sir."

Tresham only laughed at this strange proposition, and Larry's doubts increased; when Dr. Butler's voice on the stairs gave a different current to his feelings, and abruptly stating that "he had a thing to look after," the servant escaped from the chamber ere his hated foe entered it, and also without the observation he so much dreaded.

Tresham was rather astonished to see his old friend walk into the room with a grave pace, a corrected brow, and an air altogether of much severity. As Mortimer slowly followed, the student's heart failed him, and he quickly asked of the health of his mistress. She was well in bodily health, Butler replied; but it grieved him to be the bearer of otherwise disagreeable news on her account.

Tresham stared, and inquired what was meant; and the doctor taking a chair by his side, and motioning Mortimer to another, proceeded:—

"It astonishes me, Harry, that a person of your fine mind and principles could incautiously abuse the openness of a young heart, by darkening and distracting it with such absurdities as you and I have discussed together. You ought to have been aware that the native weakness and delicacy of a girlish mind was at the mercy of any direction you chanced to give it; and to use your advantage and power only for the purpose of injuring, was an act, if premeditated, unworthy of the scholar and the man of feeling."

Tresham's damp pale brow parched and reddened at this preface, and he again inquired, with spirit, what could possibly be meant.

"In a word, then, Anna has confessed to her parents all the chilling doubts with which you have crowded her mind, and brought them to forbid your visits to the house."

"Excuse me, Mr. Tresham, but this is yours," said Mortimer, handing him Mr. Ruth's letter.

Tresham rapidly perused it; and—"Gentlemen, you amaze, confound me!"—he exclaimed.

"It is true, however," resumed Mortimer: "she avers, with streaming eyes, that through your horrible, though childish conceits——"

"To a child, horrible," interrupted Butler.

"Her sleep is haunted by hideous dreams, her sense of right and wrong, real and imaginary, confounded——"

"Her conscience disturbed, her life embittered, in a word, she is almost broken-hearted"—added Butler.

"The curse of folly on my own credulous heart, that could expect anything but whim and change from a woman,—a girl —a child!" Thresham said, vehemently mounting his climax in mingled feelings of mortification and passion.

"Not so trifling, nor so childish, either, perhaps," continued Butler—"Anna's present act does not deserve such an epithet; and it is only natural to expect——"

"Does she know I am so ill, sir?" the student abruptly asked.

"No, sir; I did not care, even on your account, to add misery to a heart that loves you, and——"

"Loves me!" Tresham repeated, scoffingly.

"I said it, because I know it; and, when you thought fit twice to interrupt me, I was about to add that, by the exertion of a little patience and good sense on your side, Anna may still, and soon, be all you wish of her and from her."

"I can scarcely comprehend you, Mr. Butler; yet I thank you for this reassurance, and am sorry for my warmth," said Tresham.

Butler, with his voice altered to a condescending kindness of accent, now proceeded,—

"My very good young friend, I am almost treble your age, have known the world nearly three times as long, and women as part of it: and believe me, when I assure you that, weak as they appear to us, sovereign lords, in the higher darings of mind they possess, beyond us, great acuteness of view into character."

"And, knowing their superiority, they exercise it against us, too," said Mortimer.

"Precisely. A woman inclined to make choice of a partner for life, will weigh and study his character with more skill and perseverance than he can ever pretend to adopt towards her; nay, she will adroitly allow him scope to develop himself, by pretending, for a moment, to relish his wildest fancies. And now, Tresham, I have another proposition to lay down. No matter how fervently a woman may love, in the first instance, she will after due investigation, be very cautious of committing her fate and happiness into the hands of any

man whom she deems likely to make her miserable. I have seen some extraordinary proofs of the strength of this quality. I knew a lady, young, generous, beautiful, and loving to devotion a fellow-student of mine, and yet, upon the discovery of what she thought an incurable weakness of mind, she gave him up, for ever, though her own heart was the accompanying sacrifice, for it broke and went to ruin in the struggle."

"Gracious God, gentlemen, to what does all this mysterious discourse tend?"—asked Tresham.

"Little—only that Anna may be such a woman," answered Butler, drily.

"But I disclaim any incurable weakness of mind that may interfere with her scruples or feelings," resumed the student; "you, Mr. Butler, should know from our late discussions, that, right or wrong as I may have hitherto thought, I am not now—for some time have not been—deaf or obstinate to conviction."

"I know it, my dear Tresham, and give you all the merit of the reformation. But to the purpose. It is evident you have committed yourself to Anna on some topic that, for the present, shocks, and, on reflection, perhaps disgusts her.'

"I am a fool—a weak, cruel fool!"—exclaimed Tresham, love, generosity, and a fear of losing his mistress, jointly compelling the admission.

"What the nature of these topics may be, I know not," said Mortimer.

"And care not," resumed Butler; "but my experience of female discernment convinces me—and our silly arguments, too, Harry—that—pardon me when I bluntly say it—one must believe them incompatible with the rational happiness a wedded couple ought to enjoy."

"And brother Tresham will allow a sincere friend to add, that they are also incompatible with a strong, masculine mind like his, and unfit for his matured intercourse with serious and accomplished gentlemen."

"I believe it!—I will believe anything—promise anything—perform anything—opinions—pursuits—habits—all will I give up—worlds I *would* give up, to restore Anna's peace of mind, and once more deserve her love and confidence!"

"That's manly and honourable," said Mortimer.

"Come, then;—let me see;—yes—on one condition we can befriend you," rejoined Butler.

"Name it, gentlemen, name it!"

"You will promise that, till we can put Anna in good humour with you, you will not, directly nor indirectly, by visit, message, or letter, seek to communicate with her."

"Are those terms absolutely indispensable?" Tresham asked, in a doleful tone.

"God's mercy!" cried Butler, affecting to take fire, "are you not the most selfish, as well as the most impolitic lover in the world, to ask such a question?—do you not see, in the first place, that your mistress's happiness and health depend on your keeping far away from her? and, next, would you ruin your own interests by a childish precipitancy?—would you take yourself out of our hands, and adopt your own course?—if so, say it at once."

"The conditions are hard, yet I solemnly promise to observe them," resumed the student, sighing heavily.

"Very good. That's plain, and only what I expected from you, Harry. But hearken further. With her we must plead your absence, as an apology for your not visiting her; your illness we dare not mention."

Tresham was content, he said.

"And in a week or so, when you are, as I trust you will be, much stronger than at present, I invite you, in order to prevent mistakes, to accompany me on a short excursion to Woodstock, a beautiful country."

"I accept your invitation, Mr. Butler, and am properly sensible of your zeal and friendship."

"Tut, tut—no speeches. And now we must part, as at this very hour," looking at his watch,—"I am anxiously expected by an old woman of an alderman, who wishes me to cut off a saddle of mutton that he avers has dangled at his nose for the last fortnight. Besides, I cannot permit you to talk any longer. So—give me your hand: good morning; and keep yourself quiet, and depend on our services in every way. Come, Captain Mortimer;" and they left Tresham to the wholesome conflict of new thoughts and feelings now sprung up in his mind.

CHAPTER XIII.

When Butler, in some days after this interview, visited Tresham, he was afflicted to find in him a rapid change for the worse. With light spirits, and an unusually free and unravelled mind, the patient had, from long coughing and cold perspirations, passed a sleepless night. Butler proceeded to the counteraction of these symptoms, and, in a few days more, it seemed he had succeeded. Tresham slept better, and felt stronger. In the lapse of another fortnight, however, the mocking distemper again appeared on its treacherous march towards the citadel of life, and Butler grew seriously alarmed. In good earnest he began to think of the continental journey, upon which he had already sent his patient in idea only. He consulted with the head master of the college, and it was arranged to write home to Tresham's family. One day was, however, allowed to decide the question; and, through the whole of that day, Tresham seemed again on the high-road to health. Another and another, and he was better and better. It is unnecessary here to remark that consumption sometimes baffles, even at present, the skill and experience of the most eminent physicians, and we must not, therefore, wonder, that many years ago it was equally successful with our provincial practitioner.

In fact, for a fortnight longer, Butler more than hoped the complete re-establishment of the student's health. But, in about two months, altogether, from the first serious appearances, an alarming crisis arrived; his person dwindled rapidly; his cough increased to convulsions; his sleep was entirely gone, and the victorious disease hung out its false colours on his cheek, and triumphantly sparkled through his eye. In haste and consternation, Butler despatched a letter to the south of Ireland, and, with the consent of the principal, hurried Tresham to the more open country residence he had before spoken of, and which Tresham's varying state of health caused him so long to forget, there to await, in feeble hope, the sad arrival of his friends.

Upon the very evening of their departure, poor Tresham felt and seemed a new man. A flow of artificial energy

coursed through his veins. Butler met him ready dressed in his apartment with a flaring eye, an erect mien, and an ostentatious and piteous firmness of step, and full of anticipated pleasure from their country drive and residence. The good doctor himself was startled and delighted when he first entered; but, in a second, he turned away to hide the stifling sigh and blinding tear, that proclaimed a mournful change of conviction.

And now, and not for the first time during the last few weeks, he thought, with an irritating and stupefying feeling, of Anna's strange prophesies, and of her assertions with respect to the vision she declared she had seen. Rejecting from the first, with laughter and scorn, every thought of supernatural omen, and crushing it under a load of manly indifference, there now and then stirred, however, in the bottom of the doctor's soul, and under all that philosophical pressure, a something that, like an incipient earthquake at the base of a real mountain, slightly disturbed the mass. But now, after feeling for an instant such an inward motion, Butler grew impatient to acknowledge or yield it place, and at once offering his arm to Tresham, routed the weakness from his mind, as he led the student to the vehicle that waited for them at the college gate.

While crossing the hall, Tresham recollected a favourite volume of light reading he had left behind him in his chamber, and desired Larry, who, with Doctor Butler's consent, had long since been reinstated in his office, to return and bring it to him.

"The windee-shutters are more nor half closed, Masther Harry, an' maybe mysef couldn't meet wid it," said Larry, much disinclined to visit the chamber alone.

"Begone, you scoundrel!"—roared Butler, "or I'll put you where you shall never get a glimpse of the daylight—begone! and don't stay a moment!"

The servant complied, and Tresham and Butler awaited his return. He could scarcely have gained, they thought, the chamber-door, when a loud noise, as of a person tumbling head-foremost down stairs, reached their ears; then rapid footsteps on every landing-place, and an alternate recurrence of the tumbling clatter; until at last Larry fell into the hall, and, gathering himself on his feet, strode across the space berween him and the door, and at last rushed through it,

never uttering a word, and his lips and brows compressed in the frightened resolve of self-preservation.

They called loudly on him as he passed, but got no answer. They waited for him, but Larry did not re-appear. The truth is, a few moments saw him beyond the limit of the city of Kilkenny, and Larry held his speed, as well as he could, along the high road to his native county, where, on the morning of about the fourth day, immediately following, he was seen, restored to his agricultural habiliments, silently directing the course of a plough through the stubborn earth.

After some moments' delay, the gentlemen resolved to proceed on their journey without Larry; and Mr. Butler, knowing Tresham's incapacity to hurry himself, returned with a light though old foot to get the volume his companion wished.

"The master has bit the man—which is most bewitched I know not," he said to himself while entering the chamber. The shutters were, as Larry had premised, half closed; and, although no shadow of evening had yet fallen, that side of the apartment occupied by the bed was wrapped in considerable darkness. The moment Butler entered, and as he rapidly walked towards a book-shelf, he fancied he caught, with his side vision, a form like that of Tresham's standing motionless over the bed. He started round, but saw nothing. Impatience, not fear, shook his frame; he stamped his foot on the floor, and rushing to the bed, pushed aside the curtains, and examined all round it. Still he saw nothing; and at last concluding that the thought which had preoccupied his mind thus tormented him, fashioning out of the folds of the drapery a form to deceive his unwary sight, Butler hastily secured the volume, and proceeded to rejoin his patient. Before he left the room, he could not, however, refuse one other look towards the bed: the delusion was not there;—Butler stamped again with a "pshaw!" and—"yet, by my soul, it is strangely and provokingly coincident!"—he added, turning down stairs.

The country retreat selected by Butler, was, as well as being the very climate of health, the most beautiful scene in the vicinity. It has been pointed out to us, in connexion with this true history, and, therefore, perhaps, we call back its features with some facility and pleasure. We are not, indeed, sufficiently masters of local topography to be assured

that the name it now bears is the same it bore at the era we speak of; that present name is, however, Woodstock, and the domain is the property of an Irish gentleman of importance. It rises from the edge of the Nore, at about thirteen miles from Kilkenny, into curves and slopes, hills and dales, piles of rock, and extensive spreads of level, though high ground; hills and dales are thickly or wildly planted; and mountain streams, made rough and interesting by the stony impediments in their course, seek their way through the bending and shivered banks and fantastic woods, sometimes leaping over an unusually steep barrier. The waterfalls send their chafings among the woods and hollows, which on all sides, and at a distance, reply; and these voices of nature, together with the nearly similar noise of the rustling trees, or the crackling of their knotted arms in the blast, are the only or the overmastering sounds that disturb the solitude.

Extrinsic interest has lately attached to this fine scenery, on account of its having been the last residence on earth of a lady not unknown in the literary world. In fact, the present proprietor is a Mr. Tighe; and here the gentle author of "Psyche," that gentleman's aunt by marriage, breathed the last notes of her femininely sweet song, and the last breath of a life she was almost too good and pure to have longer breathed in a bad and gross world. Here she sang, in sighings of the heart, her last melancholy farewell to the "Odours of Spring;" and, alas! the flowers she addressed had not wasted their perfume till they were transplanted to her grave. A beautiful girl, long the protégé of the minstrel, culled them with her young hands, and, in recollection of notes that the silent tongue had once murmured, placed them on her bed of clay, and thus in the tears of beauty and of youthful sorrow, they were there nurtured. The grave is one of many of the churchyard of the village that skirts the domain. The river runs smoothly by. The ruins of an ancient abbey, that have been partially converted into a church, reverently throw their mantle of tender shadow over it: simple primroses and daisies now blossom round; and near it, in some scathed old trees, the rooks caw her requiem. It is a place for the grave of a poetess.

But, when Tresham visited this district, it had, for him, the single yet abundant interest of its own beauty. Even as he approached it the introductory scenery grew fair and enchant-

ing. The country outside of Kilkenny was uniform; but at last, from the highest point of a rough mountain road, his eye was at once flung over a semicircle extent of hill, dell, and mountain, broken into every desirable shape of the picturesque, and thrown and tossed about, as if in the awful sportiveness of the creating hand. Hill bestrode hill, the guardian giants of the race appearing pale and mysterious in the distance; while through the mist, in the depths of a spacious valley, the lady Nore curved on her graceful course.

It was the first approach of an unusually fine evening in September, and the red sun, setting over an extensive vista at Tresham's back, lacquered all the opposite scene with gold; producing, at the same time, those stretching shadows that make evening the painter's best hour for the study of his *chiar'oscuro*. At every turn of this road the scene only changed into another mode of beauty. From a nearer point appeared the lowly village of Inistiogue; a few white cottages, glinting, like white stones, at the bases, and in the mighty embrace of hills, richly planted. Its light and not inelegant bridge spanned the crystal river, groups and groups of trees massing behind it; and, over all, the high grounds of Woodstock rising in continued and variegated foliage. Tears of pleasure filled Tresham's eyes. He felt it was happiness to live in so fair a world; alas!—he enjoyed the scene as if he had been doomed to enjoy it.

When the travellers had passed the bridge, and entered the noble solitude of Woodstock, twilight had just begun to steal in, like a changing spirit, amid the glow of day. The carriage drove through a good part of the domain. They got out and descended a path over the side of a sloping dell, and Butler pointed out, on the opposite side, a neat thatched cottage, which, he said, was to be Tresham's residence, the absent proprietor having invited Butler to make occasional use of it.

At they approached, an old woman of decent and primitive appearance stood at the door to welcome them. Butler, addressing her by the name of "nurse," said he had brought her a patient, along with whom himself would be her guest for the night. They entered, and occupied two neat apartments, in which rustic plainness seemed rather a tasteful affectation than a necessity. Tresham enjoyed his situation in an impotent overflow of spirits; yet unaware of Butler's opinion of

his health, and, by the miserable fatality that blinds the observation of almost all invalids in his case, not prepared, himself, to fear any danger, the poor victim declared, laughingly, that it was worth while to be ill for the sake of so delightful a change.

CHAPTER XIV.

At the time of Tresham's departure from Kilkenny, Anna's bodily health was almost completely restored, and her mind, too, after the last conversation with Butler and Mortimer, grew calmer and more settled, so that her affectionate family now detected but slight symptoms of wandering. She was, however, much changed in spirits; she spoke very little, even to Maria, and continually sought the silence and abstraction of her own chamber. When crossed in such purposes, Anna showed more wildness and irritability than on other occasions, and compelled, out of the fears and solicitude of her mother and sister, a submission to her waywardness.

The only person who succeeded in rallying her, and soothing her temper, was Butler. He visited her often, and, by a repetition of his easy and yet kind manner and conversation, often drew her from solitude, and won her to engage in refreshing discourses and speculations. He supplied her, too, with light and pleasing books, calculated to rival the impressions made by her late reading; and, in a word, used every judicious means of restoring her to a rational balance of mind and feeling.

But one cruel cause of uneasiness to Anna soon occurred. The time mentioned by Butler, and all her friends, as fixed for Tresham's return from Italy, came and went without his appearance before her. Another week, and another still elapsed, and she did not see him—not even a letter arrived. She began to make inquiries, and the explanations attempted to be given seemed to Anna unsatisfactory and evasive. Her susceptible heart whispered to her, that there was no reality, no conviction, in the words that fell upon her ear. And still the time lapsed, and still she had no letter; nothing, in

fact, like an assurance *from himself*, that the accounts given her were true ; that Tresham was well—that he was alive !

So soon as these thoughts entered her mind, all the spectral fancies that for some time had lain hushed in it, stirred and got life again, and it was peopled with them ! Inward voices told her that her lover was dead—dead ! that she had in verity been visited by his warning fetch, and that the fatal prognostic had been verified, and the stories of his sudden journey to Italy were, she now assured herself, only kind equivocations, to disguise from her, in her weak state, the sad and destroying truth.

At first she indulged these thoughts in silence, and her friends could only perceive that a sudden and bad change had come over her mind, until towards the close of a day, about a week after Tresham's excursion to Woodstock, a decisive occurrence took place.

Maria had left Anna disposed to sleep on a couch in her chamber ; and some time elapsed when she heard the invalid's voice calling aloud to her. Maria hastily entered, and saw Anna sitting up with a distracted air, pale as a corse, and every limb shaking. Inquiring the cause, Anna said—

" Oh, Maria ! I have dreamt an appalling dream, if, indeed, it was a dream."

" It must have been—what else could it be ? You slept ; I left you sleeping, my dearest Anna—forget it," interrupted the anxious sister.

" I cannot forget it, Maria ; but I will think it *was* a dream ; I may have slept ; my poor mind grew quieter a moment before—and, surely, I could not have fancied it."

" 'Tis all weakness, Anna ; this confinement and this close air prey on your nerves ; let us have a turn in the garden ; come, lean on me."

" No ; listen to me, Maria. This I dreamt, if dream it must be. I was sitting where I am, thinking of *him ;* everything appeared as usual about me ; the chairs, the books, the window, and all. The window darkened—I turned and just caught the shadow of a pale face receding from the glass. Then I grew troubled, and the room filled with sound, that deepened and deepened, and at last I heard—'He is *not* dead !'"

" Dead !" repeated Maria—" Why should you require that information in any shape ? What cause was there to fear it ? How could you ever suppose it, my dear Anna ?"

"'*Yet!*' resumed Anna, "the invisible voices added, 'Yet!' 'He is not dead—Yet!' they said, 'but go and seek him! seek him in solitude, and in the darkness that is falling fast upon his soul!'—All this I was told, Maria—what could it mean?" And she fixed her blazing eyes on her startled sister.

"Nothing, nothing, my love—it could mean nothing; we are warned by religion itself, as well as by reason, to place no thought on dreams."

"Why do you look so pale, and tremble so, Maria?" asked Anna, a stern spirit controlling her own agitation—"look on me!—tell me—do not deceive me! do not dare to deceive me! Where is he gone, indeed? What falsehoods have they told me? he was *not* here!"

"Oh, sister, sister, compose yourself!—did you not hear he was in Italy? Did they not bring you his own assurance that he travelled thither?"

"They—they! answer for yourself, sister!" cried Anna, her manner growing every moment wilder; "and, now I recollect, *you* never told me that!—never from yourself! Tell it now, if you can—if you dare! on the peril of your soul, answer me—where is Tresham?—ha!" she continued in a scream, and starting up, "you grow paler, Maria!—you wince, and are silent!"

Maria could only supplicate her to be patient.

"I see it now!—no, no, he is not in Italy!—he never was! he never sent me that messsge!—he is somewhere near us, and *I* will find him!" she paused a moment, then struck by a sudden association, "answer me again, sister!—one day—I do not—cannot recollect when or where, or how, but one day I heard, while you thought I slept, you and Mortimer mention, in a whisper, first his name, and then you spoke of Woodstock, and Butler has often been absent from town, before and since, for days together—tell me!—is he not there?—or was he not?—did he not die there?—did he not?"

"No, sister!—I reply to your question on my word of truth, and in the presence of the Great Judge of truth!—he did not die!—he is not dead!" Maria answered with some vehemence, glad to seize a point for plausible equivocation.

"But speak to my whole question!—is he at Woodstock now?—is he dying there now?—you do not so readily answer that—you cannot!—my own thought is true—true, and I will

prove its truth !" and Anna, snatching a scarf and hat, rushed towards the door. Her sister flew between her and it.

"Let me pass ! let me pass !" exclaimed Anna, in a climax of madness, while she stamped her small foot on the floor, and still moved to go out.

"For the sake of heaven ! dearest sister !—for your own, and *his* sake !—for our father and mother's sake !—for your poor sister's sake !"—cried Maria, kneeling with her back to the door.

"Let me pass, I say !—I have no friends ! no kin !—all have deceived me !—stories, stories you have all told me !—he may now be stiff in his shroud—earth and worms ! now while I talk !—let me pass !—or, do not—" the fair maniac continued, catching up a knife that unfortunately lay on the table—"do not ! or by the blue vault over our heads I will bury this in my own heart !"—and, in an attitude of mingled grace and sternness, that in one so young was at once grand and terrible, she raised the blade high in her clenched hand.

Maria screamed aloud, and ran from the apartment, calling upon her father and Mortimer. As she turned down stairs an appalling laugh rang through Anna's chamber. Maria's cries instantly alarmed her mother and the servants, but Mr. Ruth and Mortimer were not in the house ; nor could anyone for some time recollect where either of the gentlemen was to be found. When this was at length ascertained, and an attendant had been despatched to call them, Maria, with her mother, and all the other servants, returned to Anna's room. It was empty, or apparently so. Maria, with a shuddering anticipation, glanced towards the corners of the chamber, and to the bed, and then looked for the knife ! Her foot moved it on the floor—the sister raised it—it was unstained. Maria's fears next directed her to examine the window, but this was shut down, and the blinds untouched, as she had left them. Where then could Anna be ?—she had not approached the hall-door ; for Maria had not proceeded farther than the hall ; there her mother and the servants met her. Every chamber and apartment in the house was searched ; every nook ; but no trace of Anna. At this moment Mr. Ruth and Mortimer came in. Having heard the terrifying story, a new search commenced, but as futilely ended. At last, in a small closet at the back of the house, an open window challenged attention. After a look, one of Anna's gloves was found on the floor under it.

Mortimer glanced down upon the soft mould of the garden, which it overhung, and the print of her feet distinctly appeared.

All rushed, animated by a common terror, into the garden. The foot-prints continued from the clay, under the window, to the principal walk, and there were lost on the hard and smooth gravel. The party separated to search in different quarters. Maria ran to the river's edge, and there again discovered the trace of Anna's feet, and, at a second glance, her scarf, caught and half sustained by a prickly shrub. She screamed, and Mortimer and her father were in an instant at her side. Maria could not speak, but she pointed to the foot-prints and to the scarf. Their eyes turned on the water. It was smooth, and placidly unconscious of what they feared; but in a gentle eddy, which it made at some little distance, under a cluster of willows, Maria thought she saw the white hat and plume that her sister had taken up in the chamber. When she expressed her thought, however, this appearance was ascertained to be only a round mass of foam, that the concentric motion of the eddy had there formed.

By this time her mother, accompanied by the servants, came up. They had found no further trace. Consternation kept all, for a moment, silent and inactive, when Mortimer, with a sudden cry, ran to a part of the garden at some little distance, which edged the main path. There he showed fresh marks of Anna's foot, that obliquely shot across a large and newly-dug bed of mould, towards a small door in the side-wall of the garden. They gained the door; it was wide open; and it now seemed certain that, availing herself of the key, which usually remained in the lock, Anna had, by this door, escaped into the street.

Acting on this conviction, Mr. Ruth, Mortimer, Maria, and a man-servant, gained the street; Mrs. Ruth, overcome by her terrors, could not follow; Maria and her father walked rapidly in one direction, the servant in another, and Mortimer in another, all making inquiries of every person they met. Ruth and Maria could hear nothing of the fugitive. They had compassed a good portion of the town, calling at the doors of different friends where they supposed she might be, when the servant appeared breathless and earnest; but it was only with his haste and fears; he, too, had found no clue. The father and daughter wrung their hands, and could but pray to heaven

for help and guidance. A moment after Mortimer darted round the corner of the street in which they stood, calling out to them the moment he appeared, and adding some words which the distance and usual noise of a town prevented them from catching.

But when the friends came closer to each other, the glad words of Mortimer sent comfort before him.

"I have heard of her! I have heard of her!" he exclaimed. "Come, come with me, quick."

"Thank God! thank God!" cried Maria and the father in joyful tears. "Where? where?"

"I spoke to some coachmen in the next street, and they say—with full knowledge of her face and person—that about half an hour ago she flung herself into a chariot, and was driven at a furious rate out of the town——"

"But whither? what road?"

"To the country—to Woodstock! come! let us not lose a moment, Maria; had you not better remain here, Maria?"

"No; do not leave me behind if you wish me to live through the interval, my dear father! my dear Mortimer! let me accompany you," cried Maria, pleading with earnestness.

"Come, then; you, Robert, return and inform your mistress of our good chance; come, there is not a second to be lost."

"If they meet!" said Maria.

"They shall not, must not; we will certainly overtake her; come."

CHAPTER XV.

THE first evening of Tresham's residence in Woodstock passed away pleasantly: even Butler half forgot, in the gaiety, and once more treacherous appearance of Tresham, his own settled anticipations.

The anxious friend forgot, too, or waived, for a good portion of the next day, his press of professional engagements, and remained with Tresham till the approach of night, when,

however, he was obliged to return to Kilkenny. He came back to see his patient in two days after: again left him, and again came back; and to his utter surprise Tresham seemed, at every new visit, steadily mending. While this baffled the doctor's skill, it also gave him a new hope. The salubrious air, the enchanting scene, and the reformed and more tranquil mind of Tresham, together with the natural joy with which he must look forward to a happy reconciliation with his mistress, all might tend—it was still possible in Mr. Butler's thought—to effect an extraordinary struggle and triumph of constitution, and conquer disease, even in the last stage of its progress. However true or false these late calculations might be, still Tresham looked and felt better. During the hours of Butler's visits, his social temper fully exerted itself; and in his absence, guided, and sometimes assisted by a little flaxen-headed urchin, the grandson of the old woman of the cottage, he explored, at leisure, and with delight, the fine scenery around him; sitting or strolling, or stretching himself in the sun or shade, and reading or thinking, or enjoying light and now luxurious slumbers.

Upon a day, after Butler had ended one of his repeated visits, and his last, Tresham informed his little guide that he should endeavour to find his way back alone to a scene they had visited the preceding evening; and, as Butler had engaged to return in a few hours, he informed the boy where to find him. His old nurse, struck with what she thought a sudden and ominous change in Tresham, remonstrated against his going alone; but his smiles and earnestness persuaded her, and he went.

With some disagreeable exertion he gained a valley of considerable magnitude and sublime character. A sheet of water shot, at the remote end, over a bulwark of almost perpendicular rock, that, as a wall, crossed the valley. One path to this crept along the immediate edge of steep banks that bridled the angry stream, which was a continuation of the fall; the path mounting higher and higher, until it nearly gained the torrent; and here a shelf of rock, apparently dangerous, but really safe, jutted over the abyss. It was purposely covered with sods, and, rich in moss, gave ample room for a small seat, from which might be had a full view of the waterfall.

Overhead on both sides, the dell still towered, half faced

with shivered rock, and half with dwarf oak and fantastic wreathings of wild herb and shrub, and at last sloping off in a junction with level grounds, from which, through thick plantations, was another approach to the scene, by means of a frail wooden bridge, that linked the opposite brows of the valley. This bridge was nearly in line with the seat on the shelf, but at some distance above it.

Tresham, gaining the shelf, sat in the rustic seat, and looked, with an awed and tamed delight, around him. Firmly grasping the sides of the seat, he dared to look beneath. His height from the bottom was about thirty feet; and the water, discharged by the fall, there foamed and roared, swollen with recent rains, and of the brown tint that Rysdal sometimes so well imitates, amid a mystery of black and slimy rocks that pushed their sharp extremities out of the torrent. He gazed on the cascade. It rushed down, in nearly one unbroken sheet, glancing some yards away from the base of the wall of rocks, and so thinly, that he could catch, though indistinctly, forms of bank and shrub that found a kind of shelter in the space thus left behind.

Here Tresham sat for a considerable time, till the boy approached him from the cottage. The student thought he came to announce the speedy return of Butler; but, when they spoke, he learned that that gentleman had not yet arrived, and the little fellow was only sent with some refreshments. Of these Tresham slightly partook, and, feeling renovated, left his seat to gain, with the boy's assistance, the bird's-eye view of the scene afforded from the bridge above.

With much toil they won the bridge; and now Tresham dismissed his guide to return to his watch for Butler; whilst he enjoyed, alone, the view he had wished for.

Even in the spent state of his frame the invalid was not timid; yet the frailness, and perilous isolation of his present stay, sent a cringing through his nerves. He scarcely hazarded a look below. The great depth of the chasm made his weak nerves recoil. To the seat he had left, it was about thirty feet; and from that, again, he recollected, for he could not now perfectly see, another void to the craggy bed of the torrent. The faintest frown of evening began to come.

As he listened to the noise of the fall, his ears dinned and fretted, and his susceptible fancy, interpreting its monotonous roar into strange, supernatural cadences, the scream of a

human voice mingled abruptly with the hoarse chorus of the waters, piercing up, he thought, from some part under him. Forgetting his late nervousness, Tresham glanced quickly down, and on the ledge he had just quitted he beheld a female form. Another look, and he knew Anna. She sat on the rustic chair, her hands clasped, and her face turned upwards to him; her pale, worn, haggard face, so unlike that which he had known and loved, and belying, too, the continued representations made to him, by Butler, of her continued health. A recollection of his former superstitions darkened Tresham's mind, and he feared he again beheld the fetch of his mistress.

As the figure, with wild earnestness, still looked at him, Tresham, after a moment of ruinous thought, precipitated himself, unfitted as his feeble body was for such a task, down the tortuous path by which he had ascended to the bridge, and panting and gasping, pursued his way to the shelfy rock.

In a few moments a mocking and shadowy likeness of her lover appeared before Anna, at the side of the ledge inserted into the bank. Her hands were still clasped; her eyes still strained and fixed; and the instant she saw him, Anna, in a loud cry, half of supplication and half of horror, said—

"Speak!—let me hear the sound of your voice"—he had been rapidly moving towards her, when, in a manner to her unaccountable, he shrunk back, and leaning against a tree that overhung the water, his lips seemed to move in answer to her question; but no words reached Anna.

"What mean you?" she continued, "what brings you here?—how did you—how could you come here?—I knew you were in Italy!"

A gloom set on his face, and with a smile that might have been meant for her reassurance, but which had the contrary effect on her, he said—

"*I* have never been in Italy."

"You! you!" she repeated, marking the emphasis he used, and confusedly pursuing the image of her old terrors, while she felt frantic at the idea of two identities of her lover—"In the name of the blessed God, answer me!—why do you look so pale and worn?—why are you only so dreadfully like yourself?—only as like as the corpse is like the living man? And now what means that shocking smile again?—Tell me—

when and where did you see me last? At my father's house it was, if you *are* Tresham."

A prolonged and broken answer came—"Tresham did *not* see you, last, at your father's house."

"Heaven of heavens!" she exclaimed, wringing her hands, and passing them rapidly through her black dishevelled hair, as with a kind of knotted resemblance she called back Butler's explanation, and this refutal of it; and Anna was continuing to speak to the point, when he slowly advanced a step, stretching out his arms.. She shrieked wildly, and cringed to the very edge of the shelf, crying—"Approach me not! approach me not till you hear me!—Convince me, first, you are he, or show, at once, your own horrible nature!—Convince me!" she pursued, dropping on her knees—"Speak comfort to me, my heart's own Tresham—or—fiend as you may be—speak to me! By the power and for the mercy of that God, whose face you hope to see, or whose dark agent you are!" her flesh stirred—her eyes shot from her head—her teeth gnashed; he advanced another step in silence, and—

"I warn you!" she resumed, growing desperately courageous in her madness and terror—"I warn you!—The depths, and the torrent, and the rocks are beneath me!—my foot is on the blade of grass that keeps me from destruction!—come nearer to me, but by another step, without speaking, and I plunge!"

These words, of power to dart through his curdling marrow, and warm it with a new life—these words only, of all she had last spoken, his fading sense heard, and Tresham gained a refluent energy, and gasped out,—

"Anna—my adored Anna!—stop—forbear—turn to me—support me!—bless me:—I am your own—own Tresham! I am, indeed, Tresham,—not long to be so—I—I am dying!"

He staggered, and fell at her feet.

Her splitting scream again mastered, for a moment, even the near torrent's roar; and precipitately as the leap of that torrent, her thoughts now shot down from their former course; but still on another as dark, as impeded, and as frantic, as that found by the channelled waters. In the first outbreak of despair, of insanity, she cast herself upon what she thought the last wreck of her idol; but she heard a heavy breathing, and tearing open his bosom, wiped the thick damp from his brow; then, kneeling under him, rested his head on her own

bared and virgin breast. He caught a moment's consciousness, fixed his eyes upon her, and pressed her hand.

"I see it all, at last!"—Anna went on—"you have been dying—dying, inch by inch, and I knew nothing of it!—the murderers hid it from me!—they said you were well, and travelling on the continent—and you were walking into your grave!"

"You have not been well, yourself, Anna," he with much difficulty said.

"Oh, yes!—very well—I have been mad!—mad! she repeated with a laugh:—"but though they thought to deceive me, my own heart knew it all—ay! I knew it—the Fetch does not come in vain."

The last words more effectually roused Tresham, and he asked—"What can you mean, Anna?"

"I know what I mean!"—she replied, "and you shall know it, too. You never came to my father's house since our last morning's walk?"

"Never—"

"Nor did you come the evening before?"

"Certainly not."

"Your fetch came twice, then!"

The little life in Tresham's veins proclaimed its last human sympathies by running chiller at this announcement: he strove to speak, but could barely say—

"You are calm now, Anna—you mark what you tell me."

"I mark it," she answered, in a changed and subdued voice.

Tresham's power of mental combination grew for a moment imperfectly active; but forgetting all Butler's arguments, and his own latest convictions, he could only recollect that he had seen a supernatural appearance of Anna in the college; and,—

"Let us," he continued, in thickened utterance—"let us try to comprehend this appalling mystery;—you asked me, Anna, when and where I had last seen you?"

"Ay," she said, with shocking indifference—"and now I can answer the question myself. It was down by the Lacken, during our last morning's walk."

"Omnipotent!"—exclaimed Tresham, in the last desperate struggle—"It was *not* Anna!"

"Not!" she repeated, in more than her former wildness—"not!—speak, then!—I hope—speak! when! where!—"

"At the urn in the college shrubbery"—Tresham replied, his voice finally sinking.

"Ha; ha!—I hoped it and it is so, then!—we do not part!"—she clasped him in her arms.

"I shudder, even in coming death, at all you mean—but—answer me, solemnly—did you never visit me at my college chambers?"

"I declare before heaven, never!"—Anna replied, in another burst of madness.

Tresham—as, under the impetus of a galvanic battery, a dead man might—started to his feet, and his eyes glazed and set on his mistress. The last change appeared. His jaws dropped—his throat rattled—he was falling—Anna sprang to support him. "It will happen!"—she said—"and now!—ha!—Tresham, look there, if you can!—there is the last calling."

Tresham could not; nor did he hear her summons; but, as Anna herself looked towards the waterfall, she saw, or thought she saw, through its thin sheet, as through a supernatural veil, two figures, the counterparts of her lover and herself, standing, hand in hand, together. The shade of Tresham seemed to point to the depth under the ledge where Anna and he stood.

"I understand it," she muttered.

But now Tresham's struggle rivetted her attention. He gave two long sighs, with a long interval between each, shivered quickly all through his frame, and fell—Anna, clasping him close, fell with him—he was dead.

At that instant, Ruth, Mortimer, and Maria, gained the bridge above. They saw the lovers falling on the flat of the ledge, and all cried out in horror and anguish. Their cry must have reached Anna, but she acted as if she had not heard it. For a moment she bent over the body; her hair was shaken about her; her hat was lost; her drapery was rent and streaming. Suddenly she started up, and they saw her seize her dead lover by the arm, and drag him towards the edge of the shelf. Again they cried out, and again she did not seem to hear. Mortimer darted down the steep path; Maria had fainted in her father's arms. That wretched father looked again, and saw his child within a step of her doom;

she moved the body with difficulty—but still she moved it—another drag—and another step back—and she stepped on the void!—as the body tumbled over with her, she caught it in her arms, and then was heard her fearful scream, as if of joy, not terror, and, in a second after, the buffet of both—the corse and Anna—against the sharp rocks and boiling waters, below.—Mortimer came too late.

NOTES TO PETER OF THE CASTLE.

FIRST NOTE *as referring to the Introductory Chapter.*

BARNES O'HARA has made use of the idiosyncracies of two individuals, whose separate characteristics he has to a certain extent combined in his "Peter of the Castle."

When he and I were boys, a man of remarkable appearance paid almost daily visits to our city. This man stood at the least six feet in height, and he bore himself loftily, and to his full altitude. His shoulders were thrown back, his expansive chest displayed to its greatest breadth, and as he moved, there was the grace of perfect symmetry, if not something more in his motion. His walk was a measured, slow, and decisive tread, and he looked direct before him with a steady eye without glancing to either side. On his first visit, and for a while after, he was guised somewhat foppishly, although in strictly sailor fashion. His jacket, trowsers, and vest, were of the sailor's colour, blue, and the vest was ornamented down the front, with a close row of buttons reputed to be silver. Below his trowsers, tight fitting at the hips and expansive below, silk stockings were to be seen, and he wore pumps, or single soled shoes. His linen was remarkable for its whiteness, and round his neck a sprightly coloured silk handkerchief was loosely tied. He had on a low-crowned glazed hat, the band of which flowed in long streamers over his shoulder, and along his cheeks abundant black curls girated.

This man so attired and so exceptional in his appearance, a sailor being a *rara avis* in our inland city, was, whenever he appeared striding along, a veritable spectacle with us; those he met paused and gazed after him as he passed; some followed him, but he recognized no one, and spoke to no one.

After a while there was an alteration visible in him. His erect head drooped, and his forward steady gaze was melancholy and downcast. His attire, too, was from day to day more unseemly. His clothes became more and more ragged, the dancing curls at his cheeks were changed to long lank raven hair hanging down unkempt.

His thin soled shoes gradually fell to pieces; then he walked in bare feet and legs, and carried a mendicant's wallet over his shoulder. Perhaps about a year following this change, he was seen no more in our streets. My curiosity did not urge me at the time to close inquiry, but I could learn that he had been the sole occupant of the ruinous square

castle of Ballinaboula a few miles south-east of our town, and that he was found dead in this his solitary retreat.

On the banks of the Owan Riah or King's River, in the swollen waters of which, Niall, an Irish King of the eight century lost his life while endeavouring to save that of one of his attendants, stood and still stands the ruined priory of Kells. It is outside my purpose to relate the history of the rise and demolition of this extensive ruin; and I will merely remark, that it was founded in the year 1193, by Geoffry Fitzrobert de Morisco. In its dilapidated state, it arouses as great if not greater interest than when in its prime. It stretches along the banks of the Owan Riah to a considerable extent, and must have been of much ecclesiastical importance in its day. On examining the remnants of this once stately mass of buildings, the observer is impressed with the idea, that in its construction, warlike defence was kept in view as well as religious purpose; all approaches to the church and priory being guarded by embattled walls, and towers of warrior aspect.

At the same time that the recluse of Ballinaboula Castle was a visitant of our city, and for some years previous, a second old castle hermit of different appearance and different habits, was joint tenant with the owls and jackdaws of one of the martial looking towers of Kells ruin.

During one of my angling excursions to the King's River, celebrated then and now for the size and flavour of its trout, I encountered the "Philip na Moulh" of this particular locality. I had diverged from the river, and had spent some hours examining what time had left of the once proud buildings. I had heard of "Philip na Moulh," and in one of the flanking towers, I had discovered the dwelling place of its solitary inhabitant. I had scrutinised his domestic arrangements, which are described almost accurately in my brother's Tale; and I was emerging outward, when I saw the recluse approaching. He turned his head and looked reproachfully at me as he passed, and uttering most plaintive and almost unearthly lamentations, he hurried through the low door way of his tower.

He was the reverse in appearance of the solitary of Ballinaboulla Castle. He was low in stature, and his gate was a shuffling amble; his attire was black, much too large for his person; and, as I judged, his entire dress had originally been cleric, and worn by one greatly exceeding "Philip na Moulh" in height and bulk. From head to foot there were patches but no rents; and his shoes, which slipped up and down at his heels as he trotted, were a mass of patches, often patch over patch.

His hat, which covered the forehead down to the eye brows, had, either from accident or by design, taken pretty much the form known as the three cocked hat of former days, turned up at the sides and at the back, and the originally broad leaf forming a sharp peak before.

"Philip na Moulh" of Kells priory, was a native of the adjacent decayed town of Kells, and by occupation a shoemaker; when he had reached about his fortieth year, and after a short period of melancholy silence, he had suddenly disappeared from amongst his village neighbours, and on enquiry, it was ascertained that he had taken up his lonely abode in one of the ruined towers near at hand. His original residence immediately following his seclusion was not in the crumbling structure into which I had seen him vanish, but in another, and his

change of quarters gave confirmation to the belief previously adopted, that "Philip na Moulh" was an associate of the good people or fairies. The doctrine on such alliances being, that the good people require human agency in the execution of many of their plans and vagaries, and that Philip was the agent for the good people of the neighbourhood of Kells.

His retreat from one old castle to another, happened thus:—Of a a sultry night in July, when not a breath of air stirred the easily agitated leaves of the willows overhanging the river, the dwellers in the village of Kells were one and all astounded by a sudden crash, which, by general admission, had shaken the ground under the feet of every one of them, young and old, without an exception; the priory by the waters edge must have tumbled down every stone of it. This could not have happened on such a calm night by human means; one asked another to visit the ruins, and ascertain the fact, but there were no volunteers. Shortly after dawn, however, when daylight gave safety, the whole population flocked down in a body to the scene of havoc. It was found on inspection, that one tower only, had, in its fall, shaken Kells so effectually, and sad to say, this was the tower in which "Philip na Moulh" had established his hermitage. If Philip was feared in consequence of his supernatural connexions, he was also regarded with a considerable degree of affection; those who gave him alms, felt kindly towards him; so, that it was with unfeigned sorrow the villagers of Kells looked on the great hill of rubbish under which he lay buried, and from beneath which, it would require almost fairy levers to disinter him. While the expressions of grief for poor Philip na Moulh's fate were proclaimed most loudly, Peter's usual plaintive and melancholy wailing was heard, and the object of pity emerged from the tower nearest to that which had fallen, and continuing his sorrowing cries, and without noticing the crowd of villagers, he shuffled away on his daily quest for alms.

Here was a palpable intervention of the good people in Philip's behalf. He was seen entering his castle at nightfall the previous night. It had fallen two hours after; if he had not got fairy warning, he must have been crushed to a shapeless pulp under the debris.

But this conclusive evidence of Philip na Moulh's connexion with the good people, was not necessary to convince the villagers of Kells of his identification with the fairies of the neighbouring raths. It was known, that if all the dilapidated brogues and shoes to be found in Kells, were left inside the threshold of Peter na Moulh's Castle over night, they would be all found cobbled in a superior manner in the morning. Surely Peter could not accomplish the miraculous cobbling himself, other hands, such hands as the capricious and brisk fairies have in connexion with their tiny bodies could alone execute the allotted task.

Philip na Moulh, as well as Peter of the Castle, was found dead in his cell, when the good people, as it was suspected, had chosen a younger agent; and he was buried in the grave yard of the Kells ruins by his old neighbours.

Barnes O'Hara, has, as I have said at the commencement of this note, made use of the solitary of Ballinaboula Castle, and of "Philip na Moulh" of Kells, in his imaginary "Peter of the Castle."

Note.—Chapter I.

Forty years ago, when this tale was written, there was scarcely a farm, or even cottier's small holding, that had not the patch of flax in neighbourhood with the wheat-field or the potato garden—putting forth its pretty blue blossoms about the same time that the bending ears of corn "whispered" to each other their near maturity for the sickle, and the potato fields were gay with variegated blossoms.

Forty years ago the "district flax-dresser" travelled from farm house to farm house, his implements of art enclosed in a square box, and slung by a strap over his shoulder. Forty years ago the district linen-weaver — the sedentary, ruminative, and dogmatic linen-weaver—plied his lonely shuttle in his isolated cabin all day long, and then, at dusk, took his evening observant stroll. Forty years ago there were bleach-greens in every neighbourhood, where the final produce of the patch of flax was stretched to whiten; and forty years ago, close by the farmer's winter fire, the busy flax-wheel buzzed always—bee-like in its sound, and bee-like in the energy of its industry.

The cotton fabric has now superseded this simple routine of rustic female occupation: the cotton capitalists have, no doubt, profited by the substitution; whether the benefit extends farther, I leave undecided.

The patch of flax is now a rarity: the flax-dresser, with his droll stories and his broadcast gossip, no longer enlivens the collected circle in the farmer's assembly-room of nights; the pale faced, ruminative, pious district linen-weaver is a scarce personage; bleach-greens for home-made linen are few; and, most of all to be regretted, the hum of the spinning-wheel is seldom heard singing bass to the crickets' chirp.

When the tale of "Peter of the Castle" was written, the girl of fourteen was set to work by her mother to spin for household linen, as evidence of her skill and providence when she was, with God's blessing, to become a "vanithee" on her own account seven or eight years after.

Note.—Chapter I.—*Small clothes and trowsers fairly compared.*

Whatever the rural belles of the present day may think about the change that has taken place in the nether clothing of "the country boys" since "Peter of the Castle" was written, my own opinion is, that the modification is not an improvement, so far as becomingness is concerned. It is scarcely fair play, either, that the young blade, able to exhibit a well-turned calf to his leg, and an elastic instep, both indicative of bounding agility, should be deprived, by the substitution of the trowsers for the thigh covering of forty years ago, of demonstrating his superiority over the in-kneed or spindle-shanked candidate for female preference. The trowsers and boots now in general use, place the rural Apollo and the owner of malformed limbs too much on a par.

Our village tailors do not aspire to be "artists," as the great city tailors style themselves, nor do they claim to be "scientific cutters," as the great city "artists" pronounce themselves. If they

assume on their signboards that they are "fashionable tailors," it is certain that they apply their own tape to their own persons to the utmost strain of its measuring powers; and our village "fashionable tailors" furnish rather Robinson Crusoe-like wearables from the hips to the boots of the "country boys." To my mind, the trowsers and boots now in vogue, will bear no comparison with the byegone small-clothes, well-fitting stocking, and double pump. Surely no Irish boy or girl could regard this earth as worth living on, were dancing an interdicted occupation; and the dancer of a jig, in boots and trowsers, is a manacled animal in comparison with his predecessor in silken-stringed small-clothes and hose.

An acquaintance of mine, pretty much of my own age, and of the humbler class, with whom I often hold converse, and who adheres to the old style of dress, cannot endure the sight of a trowsers on any one. He tells me that the first person who, to his knowledge, wore a trowsers, was Wilcox Roundhead, a cabinet-maker; and it is his belief that Wilcox Roundhead was the originator of that objectionable garb. There was every excuse for Wilcox Roundhead to put on a trowsers, where no extenuation can be pleaded for others. As a matter of course I enquired, why Wilcox Roundhead's assumption of the trowsers was to be tolerated, and my friend supplied me with the following anecdote exculpatory of the innovator:—

Of a Saturday evening, Wilcox Roundhead, the cabinet-maker, and a number of other handicraft men, assembled to take a stoup: thirsty they all were, as it was natural they should be, following the week's labor and the week's abstinence. One of the boozers attracted the notice of the others by frequent exclamations and writhings, indicative of pain. When enquiry was made, he aroused the commiseration of his comrades by informing them he was afflicted by a fearfully ailing leg. One of the company, who professed great skill in such matters, examined the limb of the sufferer, and pronounced it to be the worst leg he had seen during his experience as a surgeon.

"I'll wager you a fresh supply of drink for the company, as we have nearly run this out, that, although I don't make faces about it, I have a worse leg than the leg you saw," challenged Wilcox Roundhead.

The wager was accepted, and his leg and that of the complaining man were exhibited for general scrutiny.

It was agreed by acclamation that Wilcox Roundhead had won his wager, and a fresh tap of liquor was brought accordingly.

"I'll wager another tap," again challenged Wilcox Roundhead, "to come in when we dispose of this, that there is a worse leg in the room than either of the legs you looked at."

Impossible! impossible! was the general opinion, and inquiries were made as to the owner of the other leg. No matter to any one who was the owner; let his wager be taken up, and he would at once compel the exhibition of the prize leg, by fair means or foul means. The second wager was accepted; when Wilcox Roundhead produced his own second leg, and, by general assent, he won his second wager.

In my friend's judgment, if Wilcox Roundhead was not the inventor of trowsers, the unsightly article of dress must have been introduced by some one ailing as he was.

NOTES TO THE FETCHES.

NOTE *to the Introductory Chapter.*

THE Doctor Butler introduced into the tale was a somewhat eccentric character, but he was locally considered to be the head man of his age as a medical practitioner. His fame had not died away when I was a boy: many anecdotes, often inventions, perhaps, were told of his miraculous skill, and there was ever something humorous mingled with the exercise of his powers on all occasions.

One evening, after he had dined, he was leaning out of his window, when a youngish woman rushed through the street below him; her arms were extended, her eyes starting from her head; her breath came and went in short puffs, and she raced with all her speed. The doctor's house was an old edifice overlooking the bridge that crossed the river. Up against the ascent of the bridge the apparently maniac woman rushed; down the descent at the the other side; then she turned short, and reached the water's edge—she plunged in, up to her waist—she bent her head and began to drink; she drank and drank as if she would never be satisfied. And when at length she had had her fill, she came out of the water slowly and soberly, and returned, all dripping, the way she had come. A crowd had pursued her as she raced on; some followed her to the water, and others looked on from the parapet of the bridge, while she satiated her extraordinary thirst.

She repassed under Doctor Butler's window, still attended by her crowd.

"Hollo! colleen-na-sedogue," said the doctor, from his post of observation. He had kept his eye on her all through.

The half-exhausted girl looked up, and the Doctor addressed her loud enough to be heard by all her followers.

"Hah! colleen-na-sedogue, well for you it is that you drank your skin full; you'd be a cinder now only you did so. Well for you, colleen-na-sedogue, that you put out the fire that was in your gizard."

The "Colleen-na-sedogue" signifies, literally translated, "girl of the cake." She was assistant to an old woman, the owner of a public oven; hence her title; she had surreptitiously swallowed a quantity of half baked dough, almost red hot from the oven.

She had no doubt that she was burning interiorly; she set off for the river instinctively, and put out the fire by filling herself with water.

The miraculous part of the business, as appeared to the crowd, was

the discovery by the Doctor of the nature of the girl's ailment, ascertained by a glance or two as she hastened past him at full speed.

Another occurrence, connected with his professional practice, did not end so favourably as the visit of the colleen-na-sedogue to the river.

One day a man was brought to his house barely breathing. The sufferer had swallowed a bean, which had taken the wrong way, and had got fast in the conduit to his lungs. The sufferer was extended at full length on a table. Doctor Butler ascertained the exact position of the bean; he gave directions that his patient should not be moved in the slightest degree; he intimated that he was about to pass to his study to search for some surgical instrument adapted to the case, but before he went, he cautioned the friends of the panting man not to permit any one, either saint or angel, or any one else whatever, to approach the object of his skill until he should return.

Doctor Butler had a son, a young member of the same profession as his father; he had been from home when the man to be operated on was submitted to his parent. He returned during the old doctor's absence; in the teeth of all remonstrance he should examine the subject so invitingly offered for the purpose. As had been done by his senior, he discovered the exact locality of the suffocating bean; without hesitation, he produced his lancet, effected a deep incision, extracted the bean, held it up in triumph before his father's eyes, who had returned at the instant. So far there was a triumph, certainly; he had been beforehand with his slow and cautious sire; but in his anxiety to obtain his prize, he had cut too deep. He had, in fact, made an irremediable incision in the man's windpipe, and even while he smiled with exultation, the object of his skill puffed his last breath, and died.

Note.—Chapter I.

In the records of our Kilkenny College there is, as I am informed, documentary evidence that our celebrated countryman, Swift, was a student there: and a curious circumstance related to me identifies him, if such identification were necessary, with the old structure as it existed prior to the erection of the present more modern building. By one of the ancient statutes of the College injury to the desks and forms is interdicted. This wholesome law appears to have been set at nought by the regardless Swift—regardless of authority then, it would appear, as in the day of his fame.

When the existing College was completed, the old one was thrown down, and the materials sold. A merchant of our High-street purchased a quantity of old boards, to be used in rebuilding his house and shop. On one of those boards the name Jonathan Swift was deeply cut, doubtless by his own hand. This board was used in flooring the shop of the purchaser, the indented side undermost, and most probably it remains in the position in which it was then placed to the present day.

This anecdote I give on the authority of an eminent solicitor of our city, now deceased, Mr. Barnaby Scott. His father, of the same name as the narrator, was the purchaser and applier of a portion of Jonathan Swift's desk.

Note.—Chapter II.—Page 9.

The discipline of Kilkenny College is now more rigid than in my young days. When I was a boy, the outward gate, opening on the street, was seldom closed, except at night, and at almost every hour of the day a group of lads was to be seen outside, jesting with the passers by, or playing pranks on them. On fair days especially, when the peasantry thronged into our town, the ingenuity of those aspirants for academic honors was most creditably exercised, and most successfully practised. Crown pieces were perforated, and strings passed through the perforation: these crown pieces were placed in the gangway, opposite the gate, and the connecting string carefully hidden with dust. When some unsuspecting rustic pounced on the treasure, and when his anxious fingers were nearly in contact with it, it became suddenly, and to him miraculously animated, and jumped from him with marvellous rapidity, and while he stared around in consternation, the college tricksters shouted in exuberant glee.

Sometimes the disappointed money finder, ran away abashed from the scene of his discomfiture; sometimes he understood the joke, and kicking up his heels, joined in the huzza against himself; but it happened not unfrequently, that with alpeen in hand, the derided fellow made onslaught on the deceivers; then there was a general scamper, and the gate was banged to—against this barrier, the enraged man might twack away until he broke his cudgel.

A second favorite practical jest was not so harmless as the first. A horse shoe heated to the capacity of the metal, was thrown temptingly in the way, and the rapidity with which it was flung down, the grasper's hand being wofully burnt by contact with it; the distortion of his face, and his exclamations expressive of acute pain, threw the contrivers of the jest into ecstacies.

The horse shoe experiment was always practised with the gate closed, for the best of reasons, the operators spying through peep holes, to enjoy their pastime.

The tricks of this character carried out were numerous and ingenious; one other only I will notice for the behoof of students of like talent elsewhere. An unsuspecting peasant on his way home, and while passing the closed college gate, received a stream of water, first into his eyes, then into his mouth, as he generally gaped expressive of his astonishment, then over his whole face, and if he did move out of range, at once, over his whole person; this, to him, unaccountable inundation was effected by a number of syringes brought to bear on him cleverly through special perforations in the gate.

The pranks just described were indulged in by the juniors of our college who had not as yet taken their places on the upper form of the establishment. These amusements were, no doubt, highly appreciable, considering the years and progress of the practitioners; but, as it is noticed in the tale, there used to be in Kilkenny College a number of young gentlemen of rank and fortune, arrived at full stature, and from every quarter of Ireland, for whom such puerile achievements had lost their flavour, and whose matured intellects required more befitting recreations in due proportion with their advanced scholastic attainments,

and suitable to their manhood. These young blades spent their nights, for the most part, philandering through our city. They might sup at the "Hole-in-the-Wall," a celebrated tavern of those days, or seek other suitable amusement to their fancy. For these night excursionists there were three modes of egress from the College bounds. They might swim across the tolerably broad river, running by the park at one side, or they might scale the outward gate, or they might cross the deep mill-stream bounding the premises to the east. The first-mentioned watery escape was impracticable; there was a snarling Cerberus at the gate, wearing a porter's livery, who might be a traitor -so that across the mill-stream was the barrier to be, literally, overleaped.

A suburb street ran parallel with the mill-stream, and in one of the houses forming this street Darby Grady, a carpenter, dwelt, and worked at his trade. Luckily the garden to the rear of Darby Grady's house continued down to the stream, and accordingly all due arrangements were made between Darby and the College bloods. Darby Grady undertook to manufacture for their necessity a number of leaping poles—horses the maker called them. I received "the cran," as Darby Grady called it, for manufacturing these leaping poles or horses from Darby's own lips, when he was a very old man.

The leaping poles were fabricated from rock-grown ash, because rock-grown ash is the closest of grain. The ash should be cleft with a proper instrument, not sawed by any means. The pole should be twelve feet long, smaller at the upper end than downwards, and there should be a protuberance three feet from the top to assist the grasp of the second hand.

At a concerted signal—namely, the braying of an ass—the nightly summoners practised this melodious invitation assiduously, and with such success that Darby Grady assured me you could hear one of them "a mile of ground," and that "a real born ass couldn't bray as well."

Thus summoned, Darby Grady brought his horses to the water's brink, threw them across the stream, and the gymnatists, flinging their heels into the air, landed one by one in Darby's garden.

On their return towards morning, the maker of the horses again attended the marauders, received his outward and inward fare from each jumper, and put up his horses in their stable until he was brayed for again.

I had Darby Grady's word for it, that his stud earned more for him than he could knock out of his bench-board by other exercise of his craft; and it was his deliberate opinion, that the stringent measures subsequently enforced to keep the college youth within bounds was a sure and lamentable evidence of academic decadence.

THE END.

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